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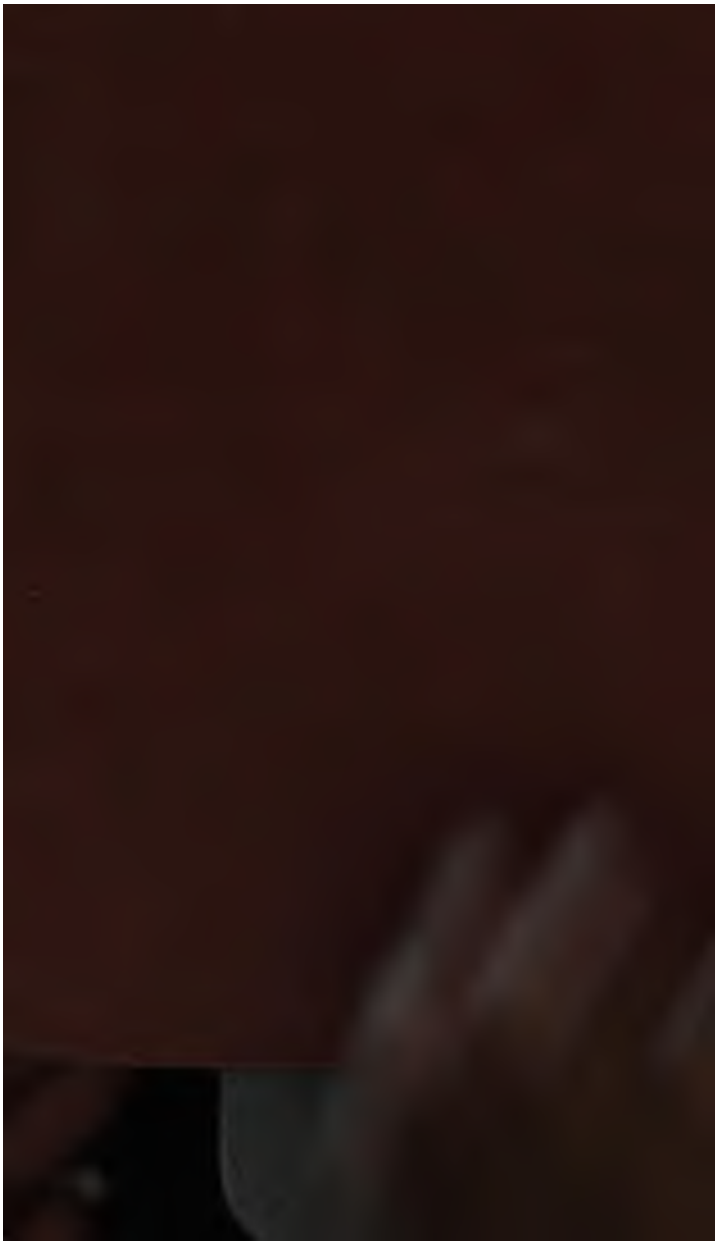

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THE WHITE TERROR

A ROMANCE OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION AND AFTER

TRANSLATED FROM THE PROVENÇAL OF

FÉLIX GRAS

AUTHOR OF THE REDS OF THE MIDI AND THE TERROR

BY

CATHARINE A. JANVIER

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1900

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THE WHITE TERROR

PROLOGUE

WHEN I went back, after the holidays, to the little seminary of La Sainte Garde—in which, without any regard to how *I* felt about it, my parents were bent upon keeping me shut up for my mind's improvement—I no longer ranked as a new boy. All of a sudden I had become an oldster; and on top of that, my advanced rating making me eligible to the high office, my comrades gave me another push upward in the world by electing me game-master of the school.

This was an eagerly coveted position that carried with it both honours and privileges. I was the custodian of the rackets, of the bowls and pins, and of the weighted balls which we use in our great Provençal game of *boules*. These I dealt out at the beginning of our play-time, and collected again and took charge of when our play-time came to an end. The responsibilities of my office gave it dignity; but its especial charm lay in the fact that it provided

me with a delightful den that was all my own. I alone had a key to the little room in which our play-gear was kept, and whenever I pleased I could hide away there and lock the door against the world. Many and many a time, whilst my school-fellows were tussling painfully with the dead languages, I was stowed away at my ease in my snug retreat—where no ushers nor other objectionable creatures could bother me—munching comfortably at a juicy leek or a fat red onion that I had filched from the steward's stores. And after my feast I could enjoy in perfect safety my reed pipe charged with potato-skins—or even sometimes, and this was the height of my guilty pleasures, with the fag-end of a real cigar! Ah, but it was a fine place, that little room!

But more honours were in store for me. Presently I was appointed sacristan of our school Brotherhood of Saint Louis Gonzaga. That was a position worth having—for in discharging its duties I got out of a good two hours of school work every day! In the morning I left Vergil behind me while I served the mass with Monsieur l'Abbé Jan; and in the evening I threw aside Lhomond's grammar that I might go and light the candles on the altar of Saint Louis Gonzaga in readiness for the gathering there of our little Brotherhood. Moreover, with the easements of this office went most pleasing emolu-

ments. As we were forbidden to carry matches in our pockets (I will not assert that the order was obeyed scrupulously) I had a good excuse for going every evening to the kitchen to light the spill with which I then went onward to light the altar candles; and seldom was it, the cook being a kindly creature, that I failed to carry away with me from the kitchen a little gift—a half dozen of olives, a handful of nuts, a juicy apple—that later made a feast for me in my den.

And then came the climax of my good fortune. Seeing how well and faithfully I discharged my various duties—and knowing nothing about my secret feasts on the cook's presents and on my stolen leeks and onions, or about my still more criminal pipe-smoking—our head master, Monsieur l'Abbé Fléchaire, made me a monitor. Now that was something like! Being a monitor was almost the same thing as being an usher—for in the usher's absence the monitor was clothed with his authority in the matter of keeping order, and that gave him a fine chance to make things lively for the other boys! But he also had bothersome duties—among which were teaching their catechism to the boys under him, seeing to it that they said their prayers duly and properly, and even endeavouring to promote their moral welfare by preaching sermons to them.

Twice a week the whole school was taken out for a tramp in the country, and during the walk each of us monitors had especial charge of ten or a dozen of the smaller boys. These were the occasions on which our sermons were preached. At a signal from Monsieur l'Abbé Fléchaire, we monitors would clap our hands: and at that our boys would stop their games and gather around us, each little group being well separated from all the others. Then we would tell our beads together, and when our prayers were finished the sermon—"the lecture" was our school name for it—would be preached: a little talk about the saint of that particular day, or about the chief feast of that particular week, or about any other suitable religious matter that God was pleased at the moment to put into our small minds.

But I found it very difficult—and so, I don't doubt, did the other preachers—to hold my audience. Sometimes the little fellows would listen to me and sometimes they wouldn't. Generally they wouldn't. All about us, there on the countryside, were interesting creatures which flew or jumped or crawled—birds and butterflies, excited crickets, long processions of earnestly laborious ants. You see, sermons—even better ones than mine—were plentiful in the Seminary; but we had only two half holi-

days a week to spend out in the fields with the good little beasts of God!

And so while I preached away, seated on a big stone and trying my best to look like the curé in his pulpit, it usually happened that I found myself preaching in the desert! One of my little auditors would be giving his whole soul to the goings on of a goldfinch; another would be lost in wonder because the sound of the axe-blows of a wood-cutter across the ravine came to his ears so long after the sight of the blows came to his eyes; another, with his hand in his pocket, would be counting his marbles—in a word, they all would be looking anywhere but at me, and would be thinking of anything but my sermon: while they sucked their lungs full of the sharp pure air, sweet with the smell of the wild herbs—thyme and sage and lavender—that were crushed beneath their feet, and thought only of getting away from me and my preaching and at play again on that great beautiful open countryside. And yet I preached most instructively and told many edifying things about the doings of the greatest saints in Paradise!

My self-esteem being hurt by the persistently wandering wits of my disciples, the thought one day occurred to me that I might secure their attention by bribery. On this thought I acted. I told them that if they really would listen to my

sermon to the end, would listen to every wor
of it, I then would go on and tell them a story
not a made-up story, but the true history of
dear old man who lived in my own village c
Malemort, and about those who had been h
enemies and his friends. That there might b
no doubt as to the quality of my wares I gav
them a sketch of the beginning of my story ou
of hand—telling them that Pascalet (as old Pas
cal was called when he was a boy) was the so
of a wretchedly poor peasant named Pascal, an
of his wife La Patine, who lived in the time o
the great Revolution in our village of Malemort
which in those days was owned, as were all th
people in it, by the Marquis d'Ambrun, it bein
a part of his estate of La Garde; that the Mar-
quis's game-keeper, a wicked creature name
Surto, tried to murder Pascalet; that Pascale
managed to escape from him and get safe t
Avignon; that there he enlisted in the famou
Marseilles Battalion and went on with it to Paris;
and that afterwards he fought gallantly in the
French army through the Great Napoleon's wars.

Well, when I had told them that, I saw tha
I had hitched my donkey to the right post
last! So eager were they for the story that they
clustered about me like a covey of partridges
and begged that I would begin my sermon right
away. And they listened to it loyally. T
birds and the butterflies flew about us unnoticed.

The crickets and the ants did not attract a single wandering glance. My disciples sat still as little ıgels, telling their beads with downcast eyes and then listening to my little sermon with a devout attention most edifying to behold. And I kept my promise as exactly as they kept theirs. When my sermon was finished I went on—and to the watchful eyes of Monsieur l'Abbé Fléchaire, who was seated out of ear-shot, I seemed still to be preaching—to tell them the story that was their agreed upon reward.

Pascalet and his father and mother, I told them, were the very poorest of the poor—living miserably upon black bread made of beans and acorns, and not getting near enough even of that, and dwelling in a wretched little cabin: that seemed all the more wretched because it was close by the Château de la Garde, the splendid home of the Marquis and the Marquise and their daughter the little Comtessine Adeline. This little girl was just about Pascalet's age, and she was the only person in Malemort—excepting his own father and mother and the kind-hearted curé, Monsieur Randoulet—who ever was good to him.

And then I told that one day Pascalet caught the game-keeper, Surto, kissing the Marquise, and heard him promise her that he would murder the Marquis her husband. That was why Surto tried to kill Pascalet. But Pascalet man-

aged to get to the house of the good curé and s was safe.

But of course he wouldn't be safe long Malemort with Surto about; and so the kind M Randoulet sent him away by night to Avign —after giving him a suit of new clothes, an three silver crowns, and a letter to a priest i Avignon, Canon Jusserand, that was to mak everything all right for him. Things wen crookedly, though, and the Canon would no have anything to do with him; and then, whe he was all lonely and despairing, a soldier o the National Guard named Vauclair befriende him—getting him enrolled as a soldier in th Guard, too, and giving him houseroom in h own home. Vauclair's wife, Lazuli—a woma who was just as good as good bread—was a kind to Pascalet as her husband was. She wa almost like a mother to him—though he was trifle too old to be her son—and took as goo kind care of him as she did of her own littl boy, Clairet. And so, although it looked a first as though he hadn't, Pascalet fell on h feet when he came to Avignon, after all.

When I got that far in my story, telling i with a good deal more detail than I have told i here, I had to stop short. All the other moni tors had finished their sermons, and suddenly saw that Monsieur l'Abbé Fléchaire was coming toward us—evidently to find out why in the

world my sermon lasted so long. And if he had found out that I was not preaching at all, but was telling a story that had for its hero a Red of the Revolution, there certainly would have been a terrible spilling of fat in the fire!

Three days later, when we took our next country walk, my story went on again—and we all were in such a hurry to get to it that it really did seem as though we were tempted away from our religious duties by the devil himself. As for our beads, we did not tell the half of them; and when it came to my sermon I made it not much more than three words long. But, to speak frankly, *aves* and *paters* were not a bit to my liking in those days—and story-telling was.

I made my hearers shudder finely by telling them that Surto tracked Pascalet to Avignon, and caught him there, and shut him down in a vault to be starved to death; and then cheered them by adding that the Comtessine Adeline opened the trap door and got him out of the vault and helped him to get safe away. And after that Pascalet, along with Vauclair, left the National Guard and enlisted in the Marseilles Battalion—and away they went to Paris to besiege King Louis Capet in his castle and to tear down his throne. As for Adeline, Surto was in such a rage with her for having helped Pascalet to escape that he gave her into the hands of a

she-dragon named La Jacarasse t ried off to Paris and killed. curé

Some of the little boys fair at the thought of Adeline being killed, afe h n consoled them by telling that Lazuli the h ied her from the claws of La Jacarasse, and o er away in safety in Paris in the house of a th -hearted joiner named Planchot—where P let ved also, and where he and Adeline fell to with each other. And while they were fa in love with each other the Marseilles Battalion—Pascalet fighting in it bravely, and Planchot helping too and killing a lot of people with his joiner's axe—took the King's castle and made the King a prisoner; and a little later, during the Terror, Surto murdered the Marquis d'Ambrun, and then he and the Marquise, Adeline's wicked r other, took possession of the fortune that belonged to Adeline herself.

It was hard on Adeline to lose her fortune, but presently she lost something that she valued a great deal more—and that was Pascalet. One day some of the men of the Battalion coaxed him to go on a spree with them; and when he got over it and was sober again he was ashamed to go back and face Lazuli and Adeline. Without telling anybody what he meant to do, he enlisted in the Army of the Revolution and was sent off all in a moment to the frontier; and not until he was clear away from Paris with his reg-

iment [illegible] t t[illegible] [illegible]line and the others know what had b[illegible] [illegible]g a [illegible]f him. Vauclair did not get the news [illegible] [illegible]g while, for he had started for the South [illegible] [illegible]vith the Battalion—leaving Lazuli and Ad[illegible] [illegible]to follow him by the coach.

And [illegible] my story took a blood-curdling turn that [illegible]ade the boys all over goose-flesh. Surto a[illegible] La Jacarasse found out that Adeline was hi[illegible] [illegible]n in Planchot's house, and tried to steal her away from there to murder her; and while they did not succeed in their attempt, both she and Lazuli fell for a while into the clutches of a worse villain still. This was a man named Calisto des Sablées, a foundling whom the Comte de la Vernède had adopted and brought up almost as his own son—and who had rewarded his benefactor by murdering him and taking possession of his property and of his honourable name. Being a very clever scoundrel, this Calisto played a double game with La Jacarasse and Surto: pretending to help them to carry off Adeline from Planchot's house, but really managing matters so that he succeeded in making her, along with Lazuli and little Clairet, take refuge in the house in the Rue de Bretagne which had been his master's and which he had begun to call his own.

Calisto's game was a large one. He had secured to himself his master's property, which carried with it his master's name and title, and

so counted upon being a great nobleman when the troublous times should have passed by. But he knew that his position would be a great deal stronger were he married to a lady of undoubted rank having also a fortune of her own. Therefore he was determined to marry the Comtessine Adeline d'Ambrun. That was why he sheltered Adeline from Surto. But while the Terror lasted he professed himself the most ferocious of sans-culottes, and so managed both to run with the hare and to hold with the hounds. Marat was his friend, and from Marat he obtained death warrants against Surto and La Jacarasse, to be used when he wanted to get rid of them; against the Marquise, that he might terrify her into giving him her written permission to marry Adeline, and later get rid of her also; and even against Adeline, that he might have ready a threat that would compel her by foul means to marry him in case fair means failed.

Just as I had come to this most exciting point in my story, and while all my hearers were crowding close about me and listening eagerly, Monsieur l'Abbé Fléchaire tapped on his breviary as a signal that the sermons should end. It was hard on all of us, but the signal had to be obeyed. Had our little circle held together, Monsieur l'Abbé certainly would have guessed that something was wrong and would have come to hear what I was preaching about—and a pretty kettle

of fish that would have been! And so we scattered to our play.

But one by one my boys came back to me, begging that I would tell just a little more. They even offered me presents of tops and marbles if I would go on. But I held out firmly against their entreaties and their bribes, telling all of them that not another word of the story would they have from me until we took our next walk. And so you may be sure that I had a very eager audience clustered about me at sermon time on the day when that walk came off.

I remember very well that it was Thursday in All-Saints' week, and that the day was cloudy and raw. Monsieur l'Abbé Fléchaire had taken us up the side of the mountain of Saint Gens, close to the Fountain of Vaucluse, and had halted us for our prayers and sermons in a wood of evergreen-oak where we were sheltered from the nipping wind by a deep ravine. All my boys were around me in an instant, in a snug corner well off from the other groups, and then away we dashed into our prayers and out of them in a jiffy—fairly gulping our *paters*, and "scamping" our *aves* at the rate of five, four, three, to the ten! As for my sermon, I let it slip altogether—starting off with my story the moment that what we were pleased to call our devotions were at an end.

But my congregation that day included an

unusual and a dangerous member. This was a molly-coddle of a boy whom we called "the Fifi"—partly because he wasn't much bigger than a wren, and partly because he had a wren's little hopping ways and also a good deal of a wren's pertness. "The Fifi" belonged to my group of boys, but usually in our walks he stuck close to Monsieur l'Abbé Fléchaire—who found the little sneak useful in keeping order in the school because of his habit of tale-telling, and who therefore made a prime favourite of him. Had we not been so eager to get on with our story we would have realized the peril of permitting "the Fifi" to listen to it; but neither I nor the other fellows ever gave a thought to him—and so away we went to perdition as hard as we could go!

In a thrilling fashion I told how Adeline and Lazuli and little Clairet managed to escape by night from the house in the Rue de Bretagne, and found shelter once more under the wings of the good Planchots; and how, after a while, in spite of Calisto and Surto and La Jacarasse, they succeeded in getting safe away from Paris—on the very day that the King was executed—in the kind charge of a good carrier named Je Caritous, who had been sent by Vauclair bring them back in his cart to Avignon. I t what a good fellow this Caritous was, and hc he was in love with a beautiful girl nam

Genevieve, the daughter of another Avignon carrier; and how he broke off his intended marriage because he found that her father, old Bastian, had stolen a cargo of treasure—gold and silver vessels and ornaments from the churches in Provence—that the Government officers in Marseilles had entrusted to him to carry up to the Paris mint. For Jean Caritous was an honest man who would not take with his wife such a thieves' dowry.

And then, coming back to the main story, I told how Calisto found out what had gone with Adeline, and came down to Avignon in search of her—after he had turned over the Marquise her mother and Surto and La Jacarasse to the guillotine—and how, when he discovered where she was sheltered, he denounced the good Vauclair and Lazuli as traitors who were harbouring an Aristocrat; and then, that plan failing to catch her for him, how he got General Jourdan "Chop-head" to order a search for Aristocrats to be made in every house in Avignon—feeling sure that by that means he would find Adeline and get her again into his power.

There was a general shudder at this turn in my story, but my hearers grew more comfortable again as I went on to tell how Vauclair and Lazuli—although they were driven almost crazy by grief at the thought of being looked upon as traitors—still were too much for Calisto. I told

how they dressed Adeline in boy's clothes—in the very suit that she had made with her own hands, and that good Monsieur Randoulet, the curé of Malemort, had given to Pascalet—and so let her work for a while in that disguise with a rope-maker in Avignon; and how, on the dreadful night when the search for Aristocrats was made, Jean Caritous hid her under his cart in his wagon-shed and so kept her safe. And then I told how she and Lazuli and little Clairet escaped from Avignon: how, in the grey dawn of the morning following that vain search, Caritous hid them in the lading of his cart and so got them out of the city, and then went onward with them toward Malemort—the little out-of-the-way village in the mountains—where they knew that the good Monsieur Randoulet would care for them, and where they hoped to be safe from harm. And I told how Vauclair, having in this way provided for the welfare of his dear ones, proved that he was no traitor, but a brave patriot, by enlisting again in the Marseilles Battalion and going off once more to the wars. In company with the other recruits for the Battalion, he also started for Avignon on that same morning; and I told how he and his fellow-soldiers stopped to rest on the heights above the Rhône westward, and how in the morning light he saw the cart—far away on the other side of the city, so far that it looked no bigger than an ant

—going briskly along the highway and bearing those dear ones of his to peace and safety.

While I told all this my hearers listened breathlessly. Their hearts quaked as they heard about Adeline's perils, and beat warm again when her safety once more seemed to be assured. Impatient to know what was coming next, they pressed close upon me. All around me were wide open, eager, wondering eyes!

And then, suddenly, I became aware that those searching eyes were not looking at me, but beyond me; and in the same instant—as though the Gorgon's head were just over my shoulder—the eager and wondering look faded out of them and in its place came a stony look of frozen fear. I turned to see what direful cause had produced this change so instantaneous and so horrifying; and, turning, I also saw the Gorgon's head and I also was turned to stone. For there, among the oaks behind me, almost at my elbow—brought thither softly by that despicable sneak of a "Fifi"—stood in awful majesty Monsieur l'Abbé Fléchaire!

As a cat lifts and carries a kitten—but with a snatching roughness of which no cat would be guilty—he grabbed me by my collar, raised me into the air, and holding me at arm's length (Ai! Ai! Ai! but it was horrible!) carried me sprawling and kicking away! All the school beheld my humiliating tragedy! All saw my

disgraceful transportation through space—that ended in my being plumped down hard upon an isolated rock and bidden to remain upon that bad eminence, kneeling, until it was time for us to go home! "Stay there on your bended knees, sacrilegious little wretch that you are!" cried Monsieur l'Abbé, speaking not in Provençal but in formal French, so great was his indignation. "Stay there on your bended knees, and do not dare to utter a single word!"

And I stayed there—with the look of a reprobate Little Samuel remonstrantly at prayer!

It was pretty bad, that punishment—that in an instant changed me from a centre of flatteringly acute interest to a centre of ribald ridicule—but very much worse was to come. When we had been marched back to the school again I was haled by Monsieur l'Abbé before the Principal, and in that dread presence the sum of my evil doing was revealed. And then Fate fairly laid me by the heels! Solemnly the Principal passed sentence upon me: I was to do five thousand lines out of school hours; I was to lose my position as game-master, and along with it the use of my beloved den; I was to be deprived of my office of sacristan of the Brotherhood, and with that went (though the Principal did not know it) its valuable emoluments; and, finally, I was warned that if I told even one single word more of my profane story to a single

one of my companions I would be expelled from the school!

Well, I lived through it, that frightful sentence—and even managed to be fairly cheerful under it after the shuddering tremors of its first shock had passed away. I did not take so very long to do my five thousand lines, for I used one of the extraordinary pen-holders that we had a way of making out of reeds tied together—affairs into which we stuck three or four separate pens, and so contrived to write three or four lines at a time. And while I never quite got over the loss of my den, I still was able—what with poaching and begging—to have an onion or an apple, or a handful of almonds or olives, now and then. But from the hardness of that clause of my sentence which forbade me to finish my story there was neither escape nor easement. In face of the Principal's warning, I dared not go on with it. The consequences of disobedience were too terrible for me to defy them—bold though my young spirit was! And so my companions never knew the end of Pascalet's and Adeline's adventures; though they did know, of course, that Pascalet had lived through them—because I could tell them that he still was living in my own village of Malemort: an old, old man whom everybody loved.

And now, at last, here is the end of my history—and I write it in no dread of punishment,

for the worthy Principal has been for these ten years past dead and buried (God rest him!) and his writ no longer runs. Just where I left off all those years ago I begin again—starting afresh from that break in my history which came when I looked over my shoulder and saw among the oak branches the Gorgon's head apparition of Monsieur l'Abbé Fléchaire!

FÉLIX GRAS.

CHAPTER I

THE COMING OF THE WHITE TERROR TO AVIGNON

IN the grey dawn of morning, the morning following upon that fierce night when all the city was turned upside down in the search for Aristocrats, a monster went raging like a hungry wolf through the streets of Avignon. House after house he entered and ransacked, only to emerge from each in turn empty handed and still more furious. "I'll have her, I'll have her! She shall be mine!" he cried. "Tell me where she is hidden? Tell me, or the whole city shall burn!" It was Calisto des Sablées, mad with anger because Adeline had slipped through the meshes he had woven around her.

But his search, like the great search of the night before, was useless. Adeline was gone, even Joy was gone—his own good old servant whom Vauclair had put with his own dear ones in the way of safety. And finding his plans frustrated and his hopes broken, Calisto's gall burst and he became as one possessed. Like the fox who bites his spine crushed by the hunter's bullet, he dragged out his hair and tore himself with his nails. He howled in his blind rage, he cursed his ill-luck with a savage bitterness, with great oaths he swore to avenge himself with fire and sword. And at last, with his hands clinched

and grinding his teeth, he set off for the Pope's Palace to try conclusions with the man whom he believed to be the author of his misfortunes: Jourdan Chop-head, the commandant of Avignon.

Past the guards he rushed without a word. They dared not stop him. They knew the power that was behind him—that he was the shadow of Marat the Death. Without knocking, he burst in upon the commandant. Even Jourdan, the terrible Jourdan Chop-head, felt a momentary shiver of fear that made him grasp his pistol hurriedly as he beheld Calisto's furious face and heard him cry in a voice broken by passion: "It is you who have hidden her. Tell me where she is!"

"Citizen, you do not know to whom you are speaking. Remember that I am General Jourdan."

"I do know to whom I am speaking—it is to a friend of the Aristocrats!"

"And that is why they call me 'Chop-head,' I suppose," Jourdan answered, with a smile that did not seem to come easily.

"They may call you what they please. It is you who have saved the daughter of the Marquis d'Ambrun. Tell me, I say, where she is?"

"I don't know what you are talking about," Jourdan answered coldly. "What I do know is that last night we arrested five hundred Aristocrats—men and women and children, a round half thousand of them. Go and look if the daughter of your ci-devant Marquis is in the lot. As for me, I do not care a fig what becomes of her—or of you."

"She is not among the prisoners, and you know it—you who have rescued her!"

"Citizen, do you want to be bled? You are very near to it!"

"And you, do you want to lose your head? It is shaky on your shoulders just now!"

"I have told you to remember that you are speaking to General Jourdan."

"I am speaking to a traitor!" Calisto shouted. And he looked Jourdan full in the eyes as he added: "And I can prove what I say!"

The General paled a little, but answered in a strong voice: "I arrest you. You are a murderer and a robber." As he spoke he levelled his pistol at Calisto's head.

For answer Calisto drew his own pistol and raised it; and so they stood for an instant, each facing a black muzzle ready to spit out death.

But it was only for an instant that they held their threatening positions. Suddenly the drums in the courtyard and the drums at the gateway burst out together in a tremendous rattle with the générale, and in the same moment the tocsin began to ring on all the Avignon bells. Outside, in the stone-paved passageways, was a buzz of excited voices and a great trampling of feet. Commotion was everywhere. The whole Palace was astir.

The two men lowered their pistols. "We'll settle this matter later," said Jourdan grimly; "and I'll catch you without running after you, all in good time."

"When you please," Calisto answered; and as he spoke a dozen soldiers burst into the room

in a disorderly crowd—all in great excitement and all shouting at once.

"They are here!"

"Twenty thousand of them!"

"All our men are dead!"

"They have crossed the Durance!"

"We must run for it!"

"Silence, you fools!" cried Jourdan sharply. "Now let some one of you with a scrap of sense in his head tell me what all this is about."

"I was there!" panted out breathlessly a National Guard—a big fellow all covered with sweat and dust.

"Oh, you 'were there,' were you? Very well, then, speak up—and let the rest of you hold your tongues."

"It was this way," the National Guard went on, speaking with a dry throat huskily and panting out his words: "As you ordered, General, we were patrolling our bank of the Durance, on the lookout for the Federalist army. About dawn their vanguard showed on the other side of the river, near Bonpas. We shouted to them that they might stay where they were—that Avignon was not going to be ordered about by Marseilles; and the only answer they gave us was a volley that stretched out six of our men under the willows. We did the best we could, General. Not counting the boys' battalion, there were only a hundred and fifty of us—and there must have been twenty thousand of them. We sheltered ourselves behind the dyke and cracked away at them, trying to keep them from getting possession of the rope-ferry—and the more that we shot at them the more they came on, crowd-

ing down to the water side like ants pouring out of a hill."

"Who commands them?" Jourdan interrupted.

"They say, General, that it is the citizen Rebecqui."

"Rebecqui? my friend Rebecqui? and where could he have got together such an army as you say this is?"

"I don't know, General. All I know is what I heard. They say that all sorts of people are in it. They say that the whole of the Marseilles Battalion is there—the Battalion that went up to Paris last year."

"That's a lie," Jourdan struck in. "The Marseilles Battalion was disbanded long ago, and it cannot have been reorganised because almost every man who was in it has joined the Republican army and is fighting foreigners on the frontier."

"Well, maybe you're right, General. This crowd don't look like good Reds—the sort those Marseilles boys were. We could see priests among them, and some of our men said they recognised nobles they knew along with the priests. They have the look of a crowd got together to undo all the good work of our beautiful Revolution—a lot of priests and nobles and deserters and stuff like that. Well, anyhow, there they were over on the other side of the river, and for all our shouting they kept coming on—pouring down to the river bank like a swarm of ants, just as I have said, and going straight for the ferry-boat in spite of our fire. And then one of our men did a good thing—and it

was n't a man either, it was a boy : little Viala, only twelve years old, his little hide still full of his mother's milk as you might say. Well, tl little chap, seeing the enemy getting hold of tne boat, jumped up from where we lay under cover and made a dash into the open to the post where the cable of the ferry was made fast. Out came his sword—it was longer than he was—and he went to chopping at the rope with both hands. In an instant there was a storm of bullets upon him. We could hear them cutting through the leaves above us with a patter-patter like the nuts falling from a shaken almond tree. And then, all of a sudden, we saw his hands go up in the air, and saw him spinning around like a top. 'They've hit me,' he cried, 'but I'm dying for liberty!' and down he fell in a heap on the stones of the Durance.

"That shamed us, and we broke cover and ran down to him to bring him in. But he was dead before we got to him, that glorious boy—lying there with his heart's blood glowing in the sunshine. And we saw that there was nothing left for the rest of us but to run for it—seeing that there were not enough of us to stand off such a crowd. So back we came to tell you what has happened. But we brought little Viala along with us. We bedded him on laurels and so fetched him home—that young glory of Avignon who died that the Republic and the Revolution may live!"

"Order my horse!" cried Jourdan.

"It's useless for you to go, General," said the soldier. "You can't stop them. There are thousands and thousands of them. Don't go!"

Jourdan was very pale and his hands were haking. "Order my horse!" he cried again, nd as he spoke he began to snatch up from the ıble his pistols and papers and everything that e could lay hands on.

"I tell you it's no use, General," repeated ıe soldier. "It's death for you to go. It's ertain death—it's just the same as jumping into ıe Rhône."

But Jourdan, still calling for his horse, dashed ut of the room and down into the courtyard. ı five minutes he was mounted and ready to et away. The gendarmes and National Guards ressed around him, trembling with eagerness) be led against the enemy—more than ready) die, if by dying they could check the Fed-:alist advance. Without a word to them he ɔurred his horse and galloped off. But it was ot toward the advancing Federalists that Jour-an galloped! No, his back was turned to the ıemy, and away he went as fast as his horse ɔuld carry him—across fields and through by-'ays—to Sorgues. Late that night he reached friendly farm-house; and there he staid, hid-en in a hayloft, through all the time that the Vhite Terror reigned in Avignon.

For it was the White Terror that began that ay. Overpowered completely, Avignon fell ıto the possession of that strange army which :t forth from Marseilles a small body of orderly eds—whose purpose was to march to Paris to venge the death of the Marseilles deputy, Bar-aroux, executed with the Girondists, and to :ing the Convention once more into line with epublican doctrines—and which became before

it reached Avignon a turbulent horde of Wh bent upon destroying the Republic and u restoring the tyrant to his throne. In that s march the Federalist force commanded by becqui was completely swamped by the suc gathering around it of a far greater body of a patriots : dogs of nobles, deserters, malconte and camp-followers who cared only for plu and for blood. It was the most curious o the sudden, irrational, impossible, transfor tions which took place even in those time accomplished irrational impossibilities in Fra

The White Terror reigned when that throat horde had Avignon in its grasp. In White quarter—in the Rue du Limas, about Porte du Rhône, in the Rue Fustarié—the a patriot sneaks came swarming together as realized the change that was upon them ; e man with his knife hidden but ready, an eager for their work to begin. Presently it begin, and Avignon was in the murderers' ha Rebecqui and his men, the honest Federals, v powerless to maintain order. Patriots wer flight. Ruffians were kniving the people. scum of nobility was on top again. The of the Revolution were under heel!

The Federalists left Marseilles shouting "V la patrie! Vive la République!" and they ent Avignon shouting "Vive l'étranger ! Viv roi!" Oh the pity of it! Oh the shame! wonder that Rebecqui, the brave Federalist c mander—broken-hearted and despairing bec he could not hold in check this legion of d —flung himself into the Rhône!

CHAPTER II

ADELINE'S PERIL

UNDISMAYED by the danger from which Jourɑn Chophead frankly had run away, Calisto kept is wits about him. He knew that the coming f the Whites meant a quick flight or a quick ɪrning of coats for all the Reds who wanted to eep their heads on their shoulders ; and, as he ʏas far too clever to turn his coat prematurely, was obvious that he must be off from Avignon ʏithout delay. But even in his hurry he stopped ɔ make sure of the safety of what so far had been is winnings in the big game.

Having seen to it that a horse would be in ʏaiting for him at the post-house, he went on uickly to the house in the Rue du Limas of the anon Jusserand—the priest to whom this basɪrd, who claimed the Comte de la Vernède as is father, in reality owed his existence; and he ʏas not surprised, being arrived there, to find ɪat that wide-awake prelate already had doffed is red cap and had resumed his breviary. And ɪen, together, this worthy couple carefully hid ʍay the papers and the valuables of the Comte ɛ la Vernède, and along with them the treasure ɪat Calisto had stolen from the family of the larquis d'Ambrun—the whole making a very retty provision against a rainy day!

Grass was not growing under their feet while they attended to this matter; and the moment that it was finished Calisto was off. Mounted on his horse, away he galloped from Avignon—going out by the gate of Saint Lazare, and along the very same white road over which Jean Caritous in the dawn of that same morning had carried Adeline and Lazuli and old Joy in his cart. But among the many evil powers with which the master of all evil had dowered him, Calisto did not possess the witches' power of divination. Unconscious that only a few leagues separated him from those whom he so longed to snare, he galloped sharply along the road; and when he came to where it branched, at Le Pontet, he bore to the left, for Paris, and followed no farther the innocents on their safe way to Malemort.

Yet as he galloped on, away from them, he was in truth pursuing them. In his mind already was formed a fresh scheme for their capture. Before the Convention, in Paris, he would denounce Jourdan Chop-head as a coward and a traitor; he would sound such an alarm in the Convention that presently the whole South would be ravaged with fire and sword in beating down the White anti-patriots; and in that time of battling and of wild commotion would come his opportunity—for then, surely, every secret hiding-place would be discovered, and somewhere or another Adeline certainly would be found!

Meanwhile, safely out of reach of this devil who was ready to fire a whole country-side in order to catch them, the little company in the cart of Jean Caritous gladly journeyed onward.

In spite of all that they had gone through during the dreadful night just passed, and in spite of the dangers which at any moment might be upon them, Lazuli and Adeline and old Joy and little Clairet were very happy as they sat together under the cart-tilt. They laughed and chattered as though dangers had no existence; so joyful were they because they were free again, and were journeying in the gay July sunshine to where they would be.

"Oh, how enchanting!" cried Adeline, clapping her hands. "I shall see my village of Malemort and my Château de la Garde!"

"Gently, gently, darling," said Lazuli. "Going to the Château may not be safe for us. We may have to keep in hiding even in Malemort."

"But cannot we go to see La Patine—Pascalet's mother?"

"That we will know when we see Monsieur Randoulet. We must do what the good priest tells us to do. He is prudent, and he will know what is best."

"If I never am to see my own mother again," Adeline went on, "I would like to take Pascalet's mother to live with me. And then, when Pascalet comes home again——" She stopped suddenly. They all were looking at her, smiling, and on the face of Caritous was a broad grin.

"You talk about your Pascalet," said Caritous with a laugh, as his desire for teasing got the better of him. "You talk about your Pascalet, but I'll be bound that last night—when you were curled up in the tray under the cart,

while the sans-culottes were close beside you—your teeth were just chattering with fear and you never once thought about him. Eh, my pretty, isn't that so?"

"Indeed it isn't," Adeline answered earnestly. "It isn't so at all," and as she spoke she looked straight into Jean's eyes.

"Come, come now. Do you mean to say you were thinking about Pascalet even while the gendarmes were there right beside the cart?"

"I am always thinking about him—and most of all when I am in danger."

"Well, if that's so, you certainly had a right to think about him last night, for if ever you were in danger in your life you were in danger then. Let me tell you just what happened, Lazuli. So far you've only heard about it in scraps and by fits and starts. Now here's the whole story from beginning to end:

"You see, it had got along to two o'clock in the morning, and I'd pretty much come to the conclusion that our house wouldn't be searched at all. I had tucked Adeline away in the tray under the cart, hiding her well under a lot of horse-blankets, and had left the little dog watching beside her. My mother had taken her lamp and gone off to bed, and I'd just lighted my lantern and was going off myself to sleep in the hayloft. And just then—bang! bang! bang!—came three thumping knocks at our door.

"I went to the door in a hurry—for the quicker I was the less it would look as if I had something to hide—and when I had unbarred and opened it I found four big red-faced gen-

darmes standing outside. All four of them had their skins full of wine. Their legs went all crooked, and so did their talk. In they staggered, almost tumbling over each other, and struck across the courtyard to the shed where the cart was. There they pulled up, right beside it, and the least drunken of the lot said: 'Listen to me, Jean Caritous!' and there he stopped short.

"'What do you want with me?' I asked, and began to move on, for I was dreadfully anxious to get them away from near the cart.

"'Listen to me here,' said the fellow, 'we needn't go any farther for what I have to say.'

"'I don't know what you have to say,' I answered, 'but, whatever it is, come along and say it in the house.'

"'Don't want no house,' he mumbled. 'Want to stay right here.' Then he caught me by the shoulder and leaned back against the cart to steady himself; and went on: 'See here, Jean—we're good friends, ain't we?'

"'Yes, of course we are,' says I. 'But what's that got to do with it? What do you want with me, anyway?'

"'Want to know somethin' right here,' says he. 'Now just you say out whether you want to give her up or not?'

"'But I haven't got anybody to give up,' says I, and I was so flabbergasted that if any of 'em had been sober my looks would have given the whole thing away.

"'That's all right,' says he. 'But we know all about it, an' we mean to do the right thing by you. If you want to give her up, just say

so, and that's th' end of it. But if you don't, you've only to say so and we'll fix it for you. We'll get our claws on her—you not bein' supposed to know nothin' about it—and fetch her along. And then the other fellow may go scratch himself!'

"He gave me a drunken wink as he spoke, and they all of them looked at me with drunken grins. As for me, I couldn't make head or tail of this queer talk.

"'But I haven't anybody to give up, I tell you,' says I. 'You may hunt the house from garret to cellar and you won't find a soul in it—only my old mother, who's asleep in bed.'

"'No, no—no huntin' here,' says he. 'You're all right, Jean. You're good patriot, you are. No huntin' here. But you've got good wine about the place, and you've got a good deal more than four crowns. But some wine and four crowns—and that's only one apiece for us—will do it, Jean. That's all we ask. So don't you waste time making a pious fraud of yourself, but just say the word.'

"'Say what word?' says I, and I really was at my wits' end to know what they were driving at.

"'Oh, come off!' says he. 'You know what the word is, and you know where the girl is—and so do we. We'll catch her for you—here's the rag to keep her mouth shut and the rope to keep her still—and after that the other fellow can hunt for her till he's tired!'

"'What other fellow?' says I. And if ever a man was puzzled I was then. They might as well have been talking Greek.

"Suddenly the drunkest one of the lot lurched himself up in front of me. He was so drunk that he swayed about like the top of a cypress when the mistral is blowing. 'Y' know all 'bout it,' says he. 'Y' know jushashwell ash we do!' And with that he gave a sudden heavy lurch, tried to steady himself and didn't, and then with a long stagger down he went right under the cart. As he fell he fairly got his hand on the hay where Adeline was hidden—an inch farther and he'd have touched her with his hand! And he might have found her, anyhow, if it hadn't been for the little dog. The dog went for him like a little devil—and it only looked as if I was trying to keep him from being bitten when I jerked him by his legs and so got him safe away. And just wasn't I in a state of mind! I believed that I was in for a fight with them, and without saying anything I got my hands on the cross-bar of the cart.

"And then the least drunk one, the one who had been doing the talking, let in some daylight. 'See here, Jean,' says he, 'you know as well as we do that Tiston, Cazat's son, is after Genevieve and means to marry her before Saint Magdalen's day. Are you the man to let him do that? Just speak up and we'll fix him for you—and fix her too! Give us a drink and four crowns—only a crown apiece, Jean—and we'll fetch her right here now. We can do it easy on a night like this. And when we've fetched her here the game's in your hands!'

"Then, at last, I did understand—and as that rotten hound spoke Genevieve's name I seemed to feel the sweat break out upon me, and my

heart stood still. Why, for a minute. I felt so weak that little Clairet, there, might have knocked me down! But I remembered that the first thing to be done was to save Adeline, and with that I pulled myself together and took up the talking again.

"'Well,' says I, 'come along and have the drink, anyway. This isn't a thing to settle off-hand. We'll talk about it while we're warming our insides.'

"They were ready enough for that, you may be sure; and so I led them across the courtyard and into the kitchen, and then I got out a bottle of Cartagena brandy strong enough to eat the lining out of a copper pot! 'We're all friends,' says I, filling a cup of the stuff for each of them —and before I could make a show of filling a cup for myself they'd taken it off. It began to get in its work on them almost the minute it was down! 'We're all friends,' says I, filling up for them again; and as they guzzled I went on: 'And we're all good patriots—friends of the Revolution and haters of the Tyrant. Well, now, among friends, among patriots, one can speak out one's mind freely, eh?'

"'Cershingly one can,' said the least drunken fellow—which wasn't saying much, for the Cartagena had made them all pretty near blind.

"'Then I will speak my mind,' says I, 'and here it is: You are the four dirtiest hounds that God ever made—and as to your offer, I spit it back into your four faces at once!'

"'Didn't I tellyousho?' said the talking one. 'Didn't I tell you hish noshuns wash too nish for our game?' and he fell to blubbering. As

for the others, they were too far gone to know what it all was about.

"'Too nice!' says I, with a bang of my fist on the table. 'Yes, I *am* too nice! And as for you four, you are blackguards from the word go—it would serve you right if the Tyrant were back on his throne again and you were back where you were before the Revolution came and had to beg your bread from door to door!'

"At that the talking one fell to weeping as if his heart would break, and said between his sobs: 'He's right—Jean Caritoush ish right! We're badsh we can be! Itsh too bad we're sho bad!' and then he put down his head and sobbed.

"Well, I didn't want the show to go on all night; and so, as I was sure that there was nothing more to fear from the fellows, I gave them another drink all round and then bundled them out of doors. It was like rolling logs to move them. They went down like nine-pins as they struck the night air! But I can tell you that I drew a long breath when at last I had them fairly out into the street again, and the door barred behind them—with Adeline still safe under the cart, and my dear old mother still safe in her bed upstairs!"

CHAPTER III

SOME RAGGED REGIMENTS

As Caritous told his story his auditors by turns shivered and laughed over it, and it was punctuated by their exclamations in its more thrilling parts. When it was finished, Lazuli and old Joy flung themselves upon Adeline and hugged her and kissed her with all their might.

"My own dear one." cried Lazuli, "how awful it would have been had that drunken wretch found you when he tumbled down!"

"What did the gendarmes want with you, Adeline?" asked Clairet, his eyes as big as saucers.

"Can such things be!" exclaimed Joy, clasping her thin old hands.

"But, really, I wasn't *very* much frightened, you know," said Adeline, trying to reassure them. "Just hearing Jean's voice all the time was a comfort to me; and then I felt sure, somehow, that he and Vauclair never would let them carry me off."

"Had you eaten up all the jam, Adeline?" asked the puzzled Clairet. "Was that why the gendarmes wanted to carry you off?"

"And I was thinking, too, as I have told you, about my Pascalet who would come from the ends of the earth to save me. No, I was not

badly frightened—and, anyhow, what is past is past, so don't let us talk any more about it. I am only full of happiness now—here with you who are so dear to me and out among the lovely fields of the good God.

"Ah, but it is good to be in the country again," Adeline went on. "Look at that harvester over there. See how his sickle glitters in the sunshine, and look at his binder following him, with her big straw hat to keep off the sun. How happy she must be! See how she hugs up the sheaf as though she were lifting her baby for a kiss. See how her brown hands twist the straw rope around it, and how she lays the sheaf on the stubble and ties it while she steadies it with her knee. Yes, they must be very happy, those poor peasants. Nobody envies them—except me! Ah, how happy I would be were I that woman, and were Pascalet that man!"

"Good Heaven!" cried old Joy in horror. "Whatever can you be thinking about, Mademoiselle la Comtessine, to say such things!"

"Joy, never call me Mademoiselle la Comtessine again. Calisto called me that, and I hate to hear it. It makes me think of him."

Joy crossed herself as if a thunder-storm had broken over them. "Don't say his wicked name, Mademoiselle. Hearing it makes me feel as if in another minute he'd be jumping up from behind that hedge. And, listen! Just speaking it has brought ill luck. They are ringing the tocsin in Avignon!"

Very faintly they could hear the alarm that was sounded on the far-away bells. Down the wind it came to them, a low clear whisper of

distant sound. Presently, with the tinkling whisper came the sharper sound of musketry and the boom of cannon.

"What on earth can it be, Jean?" asked Adeline.

"God only knows," Jean answered.

"But here are some fellows who are likely soon to have a hand in it, whatever it is."

As he spoke, there came around a bend of the road ahead of them, under a cloud of dust, a hundred or more National Guards. They were well armed, all with guns and swords, and were swinging along rapidly toward Avignon. As they neared the cart Jean hailed them: "Hello, comrades! where are you bound?"

"Vive la Montagne!" shouted the marching men.

"Oh, it's that way, is it? So you are going to join the Federalist army?"

"Down with the Aristocrats! Down with the Federalists!" shouted the whole company.

"But if you are neither Aristocrats nor Federalists, what are you—and where do you come from?" Jean asked.

"We are the patriots of Védènes," a sergeant answered. "We are hurrying to the rescue of the Avignon Montagnards. Vive la Montagne! Vive la Convention!" And in another moment the whole company had passed.

But while the cloud of dust they raised still showed down the road, another cloud of dust came in sight up the road; and before long Jean and the others could make out another body of men coming toward them—which proved to be, as it drew nearer, a force of four or five hundred:

with mounted officers, beating drums, some pieces of cannon—a regular little army. These men also were marching rapidly. Presently they were passing the cart.

"Hello, there, comrades! Where are you going at such a pace?" Jean called out.

"Vive la Plaine! Vive les Fédéralistes! Down with the Convention!" they cried, as they swept onward.

"Then you're off to join the Federalists, are you?" Jean asked.

"We're off to make the Avignon Montagnards behave themselves!" one of the men answered grimly. And away went the column, with cries of "Hurrah for the Comtat!" "Hurrah for Carpentras!" "Hurrah for the Pope!"

"If those fellows catch up with the other fellows," said Jean, "there'll be trouble. They don't seem to have the same ideas!"

And then they saw still a third company coming toward them—a little poor company of not more than thirty men, but few of whom were armed. But small though this company was, there were two parties in it—one from the village of Bausset, and one from the hamlet of La Roque-sur-Pernes. Chance had brought them together on the road to Avignon, and without asking questions they had joined forces. Poor starved peasants they were, the whole of them. A few of them had guns. Most of them had only pitchforks. But every man Jack of them, intent upon pilfering, carried a bag.

"And what party do *you* hold with, comrades?" Jean called out as he came abreast of

them—and much to his astonishment he got two very different replies.

"Vive la Plaine!" cried the wolf-hunters of La Bausset.

"Vive la Montagne!" cried the bean-eaters of La Roque-sur-Pernes.

More astonished than Jean were the men by whom these clashing war-cries were uttered. The poor devils really had been thinking more of plunder than of politics, and it had not occurred to either party to sound the other as to its political faith. But being thus apprised that, however friendly they might be as robbers, as patriots they were enemies, they suddenly drew apart from each other and began an angry war of words—and in another minute or two had passed on to blows. With their fists and their feet and their sticks they went at each other. But, luckily, they were too poor for powder, and the few who had guns could use them only as clubs.

The cart had passed on, the travellers standing up in it and looking back at this sudden strange conflict. Caritous put what they all were feeling into words. "It twists one's heart," he said, "to see those poor starving devils going on like that."

"We ought to go back and separate them," cried Adeline. "Just see how they are pounding each other!"

"Yes," Jean answered, "they are pounding hard—but if we tried to stop them they'd pound us harder," and he cracked his whip over the backs of the horses that they might hurry away from the pitiful sight.

"But see here," put in Lazuli, "we can't leave them trying to kill each other. It isn't Christian."

"I tell you," Caritous replied, "that we can't stop them! Whoever tried to would get a whack on his head. They're just senseless wild beasts in a hungry rage."

"Caritous! my dear Caritous!" Adeline said earnestly, clasping her hands in entreaty. "Stop the horses! Stop the horses for just a moment and let me go back to them. You'll see that I'll make the poor things listen to reason and behave themselves."

Jean's good heart was not less moved than the women's hearts were by this sad senseless fighting. His wits were working to find some way of stopping it, and at Adeline's appeal his resolution was formed,

"I think that I can stop them," he said, drawing the rein and bringing the horses to a halt. "But if I do it you'll all have to go hungry until we get to Malemort."

At that the three women cried out that they were willing to go hungry that day and the next day too if only he would bring the fight to an end. Clairet alone protested—and Adeline silenced his protests with a big apple that kind mother Caritous had slipped into her pocket when she was coming away.

"Very well," said Caritous. "Now you will see what you will see," and he opened the locker of the cart and took out from it three great loaves of home-made bread covered with a mouth-watering crust. With the loaves under his arm, off he went down the road.

By this time the fight had become serious. A half dozen of the hungry weak creatures had been knocked into the ditch, and most of the others were losing their thin blood from their broken heads. But all of them who could stand were at it still.

As Jean drew near them he began to slice off big chunks of bread which he threw into the thick of the crowd. "What are you fighting about, anyway?" he called out. "Aren't we all brothers in these days? You are just making asses of yourselves fighting like that among yourselves, instead of all going together to fight against the tyrants!"

While he spoke, the fight ended. As the poor devils saw the chunks of bread falling among them they let go of each other and eagerly snatched at the food—for their teeth were long with hunger, and many a day had passed since a chance to eat bread had come to them. For most of them the chance to eat such bread as that was never had come at all!

Jean stepped backward toward the cart slowly, cutting more chunks of bread and scattering them along the road. After him trailed the whole starving company. As each man seized his piece he sat down by the roadside to eat it. By the time that Jean got back to the cart they all were seated in a straggling double line, friends and enemies together, their fight forgotten in their joy that they had found food.

CHAPTER IV

A STORY OF TWO COWARDS

As the cart went on again through the hot sunshine the cigales were rasping out their piercing buzz from every tree. The day was advancing, and Malemort still was far off, hidden in the flanks of Mont Ventour. Yet close above them, as it seemed, towered the great mountain. They could see the black lines of its fearfully deep ravines and the great black masses of its forests, and high over all its bare summit capped with clouds.

On they went, crossing the green streams of the Sorgues and the marsh lands of Entraigues. Ahead of them they caught glimpses of the bell-towers of Monteux; and far beyond Monteux, looming up like a great stone heap, was the Papal city of Carpentras—where, unlike all other cities in Christendom, there were no bell-towers at all!

While they were crossing that level country they fell in with another little army: a company of three hundred or more, all well armed with guns and swords.

"We needn't ask where those mincing-looking fellows, with their stealthy side-looks, are going," Jean said as he cracked his whip angrily.

"Who are they, Jean?" asked Lazuli.

"And what are they wearing on their breasts?" added Adeline. "It looks like a red field-poppy."

"They are the Whites of Monteux," Jean answered. "And if you'll look closer you'll see that what they're wearing is a red fleur-de-lys."

"So it is!" exclaimed Lazuli. "And, see, they all of them have a holy image stuck in their hats."

"That's their great saint, Saint Gens. For the Monteux folks he's about the only saint in Paradise. In fact, according to their notions, he takes the lead of the good God! They never dream of praying to anybody but Saint Gens the Ploughman. He's good enough for them, they say! And now listen to what they'll answer when I ask them where they're off to." And Jean called out: "Hello, comrades! Where are you bound? To help the Montagnards in Avignon?"

"Hurrah for Saint Gens! Hurrah for the Pope! Down with the Montagnards! Hurrah for Saint Gens!" the Monteux men roared in chorus, and roared in so droll a way that Jean fairly burst out laughing. But this was unlucky, for his laughter went down the wrong way with the roarers, and they angrily clustered around the cart—shaking their fists at Jean while they roared still louder for their great Saint Gens. In a moment one of them had clambered up on the shafts, and with his bare sword at Jean's breast cried out in a sputtering rage: "You Avignon thief! Just you cry 'Hurrah for Saint Gens!'

and be quick about it—or I'll run my sword into you and make you spew out your dirty soul!"

But Jean Caritous was not the man to take orders from anybody, least of all from a parcel of miserable Aristocrats! He had his hand on his club in an instant; and in another instant there would have been some very lively fighting, had not old Joy—who knew the canticles of all the saints and saintesses in Paradise—suddenly been moved to put a spoke in his wheel by piping up in her thin old voice:

"Honour to Saint Gens we bring—
Let us all together sing
That pure song to his glory
Which artlessly pleads
The magnificent story
Of all his good deeds!"

"Bravo! Bravo!" cried all the Holy-wafer-eaters of Monteux together; and the angriest of the lot—the one who had his sword at Jean's breast—fairly was melted to tears. Back went his sword into its scabbard, and in another instant he was hugging old Joy in thanks for her canticle about his beloved great Saint Gens. And so the danger passed, and the cart went safely onward. For a long while those in it could hear behind them the Monteux men singing

"A l'ounour de Sant Gènt
Cantèn toutis ensèn
Aquén pious cantico
Que conto sans façoun
L'istòri magnifico
De si santis acioun!"

"Well!" said Jean, "did you ever see a man in such a temper about nothing as that fellow was!"

"I never saw a man nearer to having a sword run through him, my dear Jean," Lazuli answered, in a voice that trembled a little.

"Nonsense, Lazuli! You don't suppose I'd have let him, do you?"

"You might have stopped that one, but you couldn't have stopped them all. If Joy hadn't blessedly taken to singing, you'd have been dead by this time, Jean!"

"Nonsense!" said Jean again. And added: "It's plain you don't know anything about the Monteux folks, Lazuli. Talk about the cowards of Avignon! All I've got to say is, when you want to get hold of a real coward you've got to go to Carpentras or Monteux."

"But even cowards are dangerous when there are three hundred of them against one man," Lazuli insisted.

"No, they're not," Jean answered—"at least, not when they're that kind of cowards. I tell you that if I'd shown fight, and given one or two of them a taste of my stick, off they'd all have scampered—like the hares they are! You don't believe me, Lazuli—I can see that in your looks. Now I'll just tell you a story that'll prove what I say is true. Here we are now coming into Carpentras, and I couldn't have a better place to tell it—because it is something that I saw when I came here two years ago with Jourdan Chop-head's army to lay siege to Carpentras in form. But I must say," Jean added, "that one of our Avignon men don't

show up very well in my story. In fact, there was a pair of cowards that day."

"Well, I'm sorry that one of them was from Avignon," said Lazuli. "But go on with your story, Jean." And as the cart entered Carpentras by the Monteux gate Jean began:

"It was this way, you see. Our army was camped on the stony hill that we crossed less than half a league back, and we were waiting to be ordered to the assault; and we were to make the assault on this very gate that we have just come through. But General Jourdan didn't want to make it until he knew a little more: and so he called for a volunteer who would take his life in his hands as a spy and find out if the enemy had cannon posted at that gate, and also if they had made any extra preparations against an attack on that side. Well, he hadn't one volunteer, but a hundred; and among them all he chose a little silk-weaver named Agricola, who went by the nickname of 'Shuttle-Griccy' —a little chap from the Rue du Crucifix who could outtalk and outbrag any six men in our whole army. He set up to be a great wrestler, among other things, and according to his own account he'd had bouts with all the stevedores on the Avignon quays and had thrown every one of them! What Shuttle-Griccy had to say about himself never was small!

"Well, early in the morning this little chap —he wasn't much taller than a well-grown cabbage—buckled on his sword, and loaded himself with his gun, and two braces of pistols, and with his red sash dangling away he went; and all of us who could find room in them climbed

up into trees to watch him and see how he got along. He started out all right—getting down into a deep ditch that ran in a straight line from the Monteux gate right down through our camp, and away he went along the bottom of it with his gun and his pistols and his sword. The ditch was dry—dug to mark the line between two estates—and about half way between us and the town there was a break in it, left to make a crossing-place for carts. Shuttle-Griccy would have to mount this break, and then go down into the ditch again; and, of course, until he was over it he couldn't see anything on the other side.

"Now as luck would have it—and luck does some queer things now and then!—the Carpentras folks had the same notion that we had; and, at the very moment that we started our man to spy on them, they started one of their men to spy on us. And he took to the ditch too! So there the two of them were—each of them creeping toward the other, and neither of them having the least notion in the world that the other fellow was anywheres around!

"From where we were, up in the trees, we could see the whole thing. Lord, but it was funny to watch them getting nearer and nearer that way—with the certainty that when they did meet they were bound to go off with a bang! 'Well, it won't be our Avignon Shuttle-Griccy who'll turn tail!' our men kept saying; but as for me I kept my mouth shut—for I couldn't help thinking to myself that our silk-weaver would be more likely to have real grit if he had a shorter tongue. And yet, while we could not

help laughing, we were worried about our man too—for he was too far away for us to warn him or help him, and when the shooting time came there was a big chance that he might get killed. But we just had to let him take care of himself—while we sat there watching with all our eyes.

"At last, just as if they'd settled it all beforehand, the two men got to the opposite sides of the break in the ditch at the same moment. We lost sight of the other man then; but we knew he was crawling up his side of the bank just as our man was crawling up our side, and we knew that in another minute they'd have their noses pointing straight at each other across the cart track—not six feet apart! Our hearts got right up into our mouths, I can tell you! There would be shooting, that was dead sure; and even if our man killed the other man the chances were that our man would be killed too—and Shuttle-Griccy, for all his big talking, was too good a little fellow to be done to death like that. And then the meeting came! At the very instant Shuttle-Griccy got his head above the top of the bank we saw the other man's head come up—and the next instant Shuttle-Griccy rolled over backward and came tumbling down into the ditch again, and the head of the other fellow went out of sight on his side!

"We all gave a yell together at that, being clear taken aback and lost in surprise! Could they have killed each other? we wondered. If they had, how had they done it?—for neither of them had fired, and we had seen no flash of a sword. For about ten seconds we were the most puzzled lot of men you ever saw!

"Well, it wasn't long before we found that our man wasn't dead, anyway. Shuttle-Griccy hadn't much more than got to the bottom of the ditch, all in a bundle, than he had his legs untangled and was up on them, and was coming back toward our camp on a dead run—and then we saw the other fellow going it for all he was worth the other way, along the ditch back to the town!

"But the best of the whole joke was that while they were running away from each other that way, with a solid wall of earth between them, they took to banging off their guns and pistols backwards—the ditch was full of smoke where they ran, and we could see the dust flying from the bank between them where it was struck by the balls! In all the days of my life I never shall laugh as I laughed then!

"They never stopped running, those two, until they were safe home. We saw the other fellow rush in through the city gate, and a moment later Shuttle-Griccy came bolting into our camp and yelled out, as well as he could yell anything with his wind all gone: 'To arms! To arms! The enemy is on us! There are ten thousand of them running down that ditch to attack our camp!' And then, all of a sudden, as he found everybody roaring out laughing, he caught on to the fact that he had made an as[illegible] himself, and before the whole army had [illegible] himself to be a coward!

"Well, I'm bound to confess [illegible] things so hot for Shuttle-Gricc[illegible] it. He got such a roasting [illegible] the ten thousand that hi[illegible]

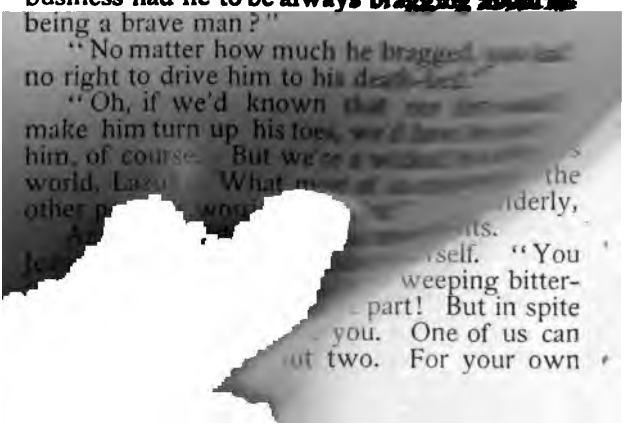
he never held it up again. All his brag was knocked clean out of him. He fell into a low way and got thin and miserable. After a while he fairly took to his bed—and I'll be shot if the poor little humbug wasn't dead inside of a year!"

"Poor Shuttle-Griccy!" exclaimed Adeline. "It was cruel to be so hard on him!"

"But who in the world ever would have thought," said Jean, "that serving a man out as he deserved to be served out would have killed him? I'm sorry, of course; but I don't see that we were to blame."

"You might have known," said Lazuli, "that in one way what he did was not his fault. Courage is a gift from God—and if you haven't it, you haven't it. The poor man couldn't help being a coward."

"That's true enough," Jean answered. "But being a coward, and knowing it, what business had he to be always bragging about his being a brave man?"



CHAPTER V

THE ARRIVAL AT MALEMORT

As they went onward, Adeline was thrilled with delight at every turn by the sight of familiar things. The trees, the farms, the hills, the mountains, all were dear to her because they were a part of the land where she was born.

"See," she cried, "there's the farm of La Lègo. My foster-mother lived there, dear kind Rouseto —God rest her soul! And there's the hill of Pié-Marin. Many a time I've been to the very top of it. I used to go up there with my foster-brother to gather broom-flowers. And over there, on that slope, under that pine tree, is the cave of the Fourteen Robbers. Ah, how good it is to see all these home places again!"

Lazuli was comforted by Adeline's happiness, and just then she needed comforting—for sharp pricks of longing were hurting her sore heart. Only a few hours had passed since her Vauclair had left her, but already she felt as if months had wasted since he had gone away. But Lazuli was no weakling; and there was other comfort for her, too. When the pain of her longing grew very sharp she would take her Clairet in her arms and hug him close to her breast as she kissed him. And she would say to herself: "My Vauclair is right—and I am

wrong to want him back again. He has gone to his duty, and I am glad that he has gone. Country and Liberty are first of all!" And then the flash of her eyes would dry the rising tears.

Presently they rounded a turn of the road, and Adeline flung herself on Lazuli's breast quite wild with joy.

"Lazuli! Lazuli!" she cried. "At last we are almost home! When we are at the top of this very next hill we shall see Malemort, and the height on which stands the Château de la Garde!" And then, as she caught Clairet in her arms, she added: "You shall go with me to the Château, Clairet, and you shall have every pear in the garden. Think of that—you shall have every single pear! And as for you, Joy," she went on, with her arms about the old woman's neck, "you've worked long enough, and you never shall work any more! You shall stay with me always and I will take care of you." Had she dared to, Adeline even would have hugged Jean Caritous—so full was she of gladness because once more she was among her own people and close to her own home.

Old Joy clasped her hands and laughed and cried at the same time; while Clairet capered in the cart and shouted: "Yes, yes, all the pears are for me, and all the apricots, and all the cherries too!" But Lazuli only smiled tenderly, for in her heart were many sad thoughts.

"Poor child!" she said to herself. "You are happy now, but you will be weeping bitterly, presently, when we must part! But in spite of your tears I must leave you. One of us can lie hidden here, but not two. For your own

safety I must leave you before Calisto is on our tracks again. He wants your life and very likely mine too—for we know his crime, and he feels he is not safe while we live. He and Surto and La Jacarasse may come here together to rob the Château—just as they robbed the house in the Rue des Douze Portes. But whether they come or not, it is certain that they have vowed our death." But Lazuli was not to be cast down by dread of danger, and soon her thoughts took a more hopeful turn. "After all," she went on in her mind, "these bad times must pass away. Our brave soldiers will drive off the Germans and the Austrians and all the outsiders who are fighting against us, and then our country will be set in order again—with the rascals who are ruling us sent to keep company with the tyrants who ruled us before the rascals came. And then reason will be reason, and justice will be justice, and our land will have peace."

These were the thoughts that were in Lazuli's mind as the cart mounted the long hill slowly. Very slowly they went, the horses dripping with sweat under the blazing sun. From the almond trees and the olive trees beside the road the cigales were rasping out their loud shrill song. The radiant hot air was all a-quiver and a-tremble over the distant plains—where "the old woman was dancing" with a vengeance as she shook out mirage after mirage. At last they came to the top of the hill, and Adeline cried eagerly: "I see it! I see it! There is the bell-tower of Malemort, and I begin to see the hill of La Garde!"

On the hill-crest Jean stopped his horses to

breathe them, and from there the view was clear. Below, in the hollow between seven green hills, the travellers saw the pretty little town. There, surrounded by her white walls pierced with three gates, Malemort sat like a white wag-tail on a tuft of grass. They were silent, and their eyes filled with tears, as they gazed on this safe refuge—where could be only quiet and deep peace. Far away from great cities and travelled roads, it lay at the foot of the mountain, lost in the midst of untrodden valleys and lonely woods. Surely, the noise and tumult and horror of the Revolution never could come to disturb the easy-going life of that still little town!

Caritous cracked his whip and they went onward, and almost before they knew it were down the hill and through the gate and at a halt beside the fountain—where Caritous, as though he had come to a relay house, cracked his whip again. Over the fountain towered a Liberty Tree.

It was harvest time and few people were in the town—only very little children and the old men and women who were care-takers of the houses while the others worked in the fields. At the crack of Jean's whip, and at the sound of bells and wheels, a few shutters opened and a few heads were thrust out for a moment; but after a sour glance or two at the travellers standing in the blazing sunshine the old heads went in again and the shutters were closed. It was comforting to know that no one had recognised Adeline in her boy's clothes; but it was not comforting to stand there pierced by the cruel

sun-darts, with no other sound than the gurgle of the fountain as the water flowed into its big stone shell. They felt as though they were outcasts in a desert land.

Jean went on with the cart to the little inn. As he started, Lazuli took Adeline's hand and said briskly: "Now, child, lead us to the house of Monsieur Randoulet"—and off they started up the crooked street toward the church. Presently they reached it, and Adeline pointed to the Curacy door: with the feeling that she was pointing to the home where goodness and charity abode, for at that door, in the darkness of night, and in the darkness of fear, Pascalet had knocked and had found shelter and safety.

Lazuli knocked and felt her heart sink within her—as Pascalet's heart had sunk—when no answer came. There was no sound of stirring within. The shutters remained tight closed. The thought came to her that Monsieur Randoulet had fled—as so many curés were fleeing in those days—yet, surely, there could be no danger for so good a man! And then, suddenly, her heart gave a bound as she heard the creaking of a sash above—and she and Adeline looked upward in the hope of seeing the good curé smiling down on them.

But what they saw was a big coarse red face, with a red nose in the middle of it, and a red cap stuck awry on a tangled shock of hair that matched a shock of tangled beard. And then a drunken voice asked: "Who's there? What do you want?"

"We want Monsieur Randoulet," Lazuli

answered; and, in spite of herself, she spoke in a trembling voice.

"Citizen Randoulet don't live here any more," the red-nosed man answered.

"I mean Monsieur Randoulet, the good curé of Malemort," Lazuli said, trying hard to steady her voice and speak clearly.

"There's no curé here any more, I tell you," the man grumbled out. And then he shut the window with a bang.

Bewildered and dismayed, the three women looked at each other for a moment without speaking. Then Adeline began to sob.

"Well, now," said old Joy. "This is a pretty fix, isn't it! What are we going to do? Must we go back to Avignon?"

"Don't talk about going back to Avignon," Lazuli answered. "That isn't to be thought of at all. But we mustn't take to worrying. We've been in worse holes before, and got out of 'em, just as we'll get out of this one. Won't we, Adeline dear?" And as she clasped Adeline's hand she added: "Now we'll go to the inn and see what Caritous has to say about it. And then we'll get something to eat, and that will put strength in us. All will be right. Don't you fear!"

"Why can't we go to the Château?" Joy asked. "We'd have a roof over our heads there, at any rate—and the farmers surely would take care of us if they knew who we were."

"I'm afraid they wouldn't, Joy," Adeline said sadly. "Don't you know who that man at the window was?"

"I? How should I? I don't know anybody here."

"Well, I know him. That man was our own farmer up at the Château. For a moment I forgot that I wasn't myself any longer—and I was just going to speak to him when he shut the window."

"Heaven keep you, child, from letting anybody know who you are!" cried Lazuli, in alarm. "You can trust nobody in these days. It is hard, very hard, to have things turning out in this way. We thought we had reached paradise, and yet here we are almost at the mouth of hell." And then, sadly, they walked on to the inn.

It was a very little inn, standing near the fountain in the quartier des Bugades—as unlike as could be to the great inns, thronged every night with travellers, on the Marseilles and Paris road. In that tiny town, on a road leading nowhere, it was a wonder if as much as one traveller came in a week; and in the bad season of the year often a whole month would pass without any travellers coming at all. But they were good souls who kept it, Aimable and his wife Melio—simple folk, as mountain dwellers are apt to be, but as good and as kind as the Apostles themselves.

The little party entered the kitchen, where the tight-drawn curtains made a cool darkness. Coming from the strong sunlight, they did not at first see that the host was sleeping there. Not until their eyes were accustomed to the shadow did they make him out: a big fat man, with his head down on the table, taking a com-

fortable snooze through the heat of the day. Kind-hearted people sleep like saints. Aimable did not waken when they entered. Just as Lazuli was about to rouse him they heard Jean talking to some one outside; and in another minute he and Melio, the hostess, came in together.

"Well, here we are, Jean," said Lazuli. "Aren't you surprised to see us so soon again?"

"No, I'm not. Monsieur Randoulet isn't living in the curacy any more," Jean answered.

"If you knew that, why in the world didn't you tell us?" Lazuli asked a little sharply.

"There! there! Gently now!" struck in the innkeeper's wife. "I've only just told him. He's not to blame." She spoke pleasantly, this good Melio: a fine bounce of a woman, who really ran the inn—while her husband snored on the table, or joined his guests in a game of cards.

"Do you know what has become of him?" Lazuli asked. "Why he had to go away?"

"I'll tell you all about it presently," Melio answered. "The first thing to do is to give you some food." As she spoke, she drew back the red and white checked curtains and let some light into the room.

"I'm afraid that I can't do very well by you," she went on, "for the hearth's stone cold. Who ever would expect any body to come at this time of day! But there's plenty of good fresh bread, and there's honey from the comb, and there are the nice little spicy cheeses they bring down from the mountain. You won't starve, anyway. There's enough, such as it is—and my man, here, will draw you some wine."

She bustled over to her husband and began to shake him. "Aimable, you sleepy-head, wake up!" she cried. "Here are some good people come from ever so far who want something to eat and drink in a hurry! Wake up, I say."

The innkeeper grunted, yawned, stretched himself, half rose—and then down he flopped again on the table with his head on the other arm.

Melio gave him a harder shaking. "Was there ever such a man!" she exclaimed. "Wake up, I say. Here are travellers come, and you've got to draw some wine for them. Rouse up and hurry, you lazy-boots! If you keep on this way, there'll be time to kill a donkey with fisticuffs before they're served. Get awake! get awake!"

Slowly the sleepy-head arose, rubbing his eyes and making sleepy excuses for himself; and then picked up the jug and slowly went off with it to the cellar. When he had left the room Melio laid a finger on her lips and said in a low voice: "Not a word before my man as to what you have come here for. Talk of anything you please, so long as you don't talk of Monsieur le Curé. As soon as you have had something to eat I will take you to where the good priest is living—but my taking you there mustn't be known."

"Don't you trust your own man?" Lazuli asked.

"My own man? Well, you see, he's just the best fellow in the world—but he's got a mighty loosely hung tongue, and if he get's only

a drop in him his tongue will wag! He wouldn't do any harm himself, but his talking might do a good deal—now that we have these new laws about 'suspects.' Here in Malemort all of us, Red and White, think the world of Monsieur Randoulet; but if it got about that strangers had come to see him there's no telling what might happen. Somebody might talk about it in Carpentras, and from Carpentras the talk might go on to Avignon, and then there might be trouble here. No, before my man—since he can't hold his tongue—you must hold yours. But I know who you are and what you want—Caritous has told me—and I'll do all I can for you. With me you're safe."

While she talked, Melio opened the press and brought forth a white table-cloth which filled the room with a fresh smell of lavender as she shook out its folds. She spread the table with it, set out yellow earthenware cups and plates with blue lines around their edges, and then brought out a great loaf, well baked, and the little cheeses and a long dish in which the honey-comb lay oozing in its sweetness. She placed the jug of wine on the table, and added last of all another jug fresh-filled with cool water from the well.

But only Jean and Clairet did justice to the meal. In spite of Jean's urgent advice to follow his good example, the women were too much worried to do more than nibble at their food. However Jean and Clairet managed between them pretty well to clear the table—and Clairet had to be fairly dragged away from the honey or he would have eaten it all!

"Now then," said Jean, snapping to his knife, "we must be up and off. Are you ready, hostess, to take us to see that good man?"

"I'm all ready," Melio answered, "and I've sent my chatterbox to the stable to look after the horses, and so he's safe out of the way. And this is a good time to go, for nearly everybody's off at the harvesting in the fields. All the same, we had better not talk. Now, come along."

CHAPTER VI

AT THE HOUSE OF MONSIEUR RANDOULET

FOLLOWING Melio's lead, they went out into the deserted streets and through them until they came to a steep and narrow lane. At the mouth of the lane Melio stopped and silently pointed up it to a little house—a wretched little ruin of a house with but a single window. She gave a nod of her head, as much as to say "that's it" —and then turned and went back to the inn.

"Good heavens! What a poverty-stricken place!" Lazuli said under her breath as they walked the few steps up the lane to this miserable dwelling. She did not knock, but raised the latch by the latchstring and opened the crazy door. Before them was a little square lobby, up from which went a dark stair—a rope fastened to the wall at one side serving for a balustrade. In a trembling voice Lazuli called softly: "Is any one up there?"

Clip-clop came the sound of sabots, as Janetoun, the Curé's old servant, crossed the upper floor to the head of the stair; and then, in her harsh voice, Janetoun called down through the darkness: "What do you want?"

"Monsieur le Curé Randoulet," Lazuli answered: speaking in a still lower voice as she uttered the Curé's name.

"Who are you?"

"You don't know me."

"What do you want?"

"To ask a favour."

Then lighter steps were heard above, and Monsieur Randoulet's kind voice called down: "Here I am, good woman. Come up the stair." He had heard what Lazuli said, and when he found that help of some sort was needed he shut his breviary and hurried to give it.

As old Janetoun heard so many footsteps on the ricketty stair she clasped her head in her hands and exclaimed: "Heavens and earth! Who can they be, and wherever am I going to find seats for them? They'll just have to stand on their own legs!"

As the visitors came up, one after the other, Monsieur Randoulet welcomed each of them; and when they all were in the little kitchen he said cordially: "Sit down, friends. Sit down and rest yourselves. You must be tired—it is so hot outside."

"It's all very well to say 'sit down,'" grumbled Janetoun; "but what are four people to sit on when there's only a bench with a broken leg and three chairs?"

"That's more than we need, my good woman," said Caritous. "We haven't come here to settle ourselves until the silk-worms are full-grown."

"You are welcome to stay as long as you will," Monsieur Randoulet said warmly. "You can see for yourselves that my house is a very little one, but to honest folk it is open all day—and all night too!"

Poor Monsieur Randoulet, the change that had come to him was a sad one—fit to bring tears to the eyes of those who had known him as he dwelt in pontifical state, in his comfortable curacy in former times! And he had changed sadly with his new sad surroundings. His long curly gray hair had thinned and had turned white, falling scantily over his shoulders as the snow comes down from the crest of Mont Ventour. His plump rosy cheeks had lost their plumpness and their rosiness and were pale and wrinkled, and his comfortably rounded paunch —over which his robe had stretched smoothly —had so fallen away that his robe fell in deep folds everywhere. His hands still were beautifully white and smooth, but they had lost their chubbiness and were lean and wrinkled and long. Only his eyes remained unchanged: they flashed as of old—and, as of old, the flash was tempered by the sweetest benignity. But for his shining eyes and his gentle voice, Adeline would not have recognized him. On his side, naturally, there was no recognition. The thought did not enter his mind that the boy before him was Mademoiselle la Comtessine d'Ambrun.

"Well, good friends," he began in his kindly voice, "what can I do for you? I am——"

"Monsieur Randoulet," Lazuli interrupted, "it is for the sake of this child that we have come to you. You do not know her, and I don't wonder. She is——"

And then old Janetoun broke in with a gasp: "It's Mademoiselle Adeline—the Comtessine! Oh Monsieur Randoulet, it's she for sure! She's

wearing the very clothes that she made herself to be given to one of your poor people, and that you gave to little Pascalet. It's she! It's she!" And the old woman made to Adeline the same reverent courtesy that she had been used to make to her in the old days.

Monsieur Randoulet was so utterly astonished that for a moment he was unable to speak, then tears came to his eyes, and he said, brokenly: "Mademoiselle! You! What misfortune has overtaken you that you come to me dressed in those clothes which you made with your own charitable hands?"

Adeline flushed painfully, without replying, and Lazuli answered for her: "Monsieur le Curé, this child's story is a long one and a sad one. Every possible misfortune has happened to her since she went away from here a year ago. And now she has come back here trusting to you for help."

"All the help that I can give her," Monsieur Randoulet answered earnestly, "she shall have. All that I possess, and all of the little that remains of my life and strength, are hers. I am as poor, now, as the Prophet Job; but while I live she shall share my water and my bread to the last drop and the last crumb. That may not be for long. For me nothing remains but to ask God in his mercy to forgive me my sins and to take me to Him in His bright Paradise!"

"Rather may God long preserve you on this earth, to console and to guard people as unhappy as we are!" Adeline answered in her sweet clear voice, and added: "Monsieur le Curé, we greatly need your help."

"Yes, Monsieur le Curé," said Lazuli, "we need your help in hiding this poor child away from those who seek her life. But, to make it all clear to you, I must tell you what has happened to her in this dreadful year. Shall I tell you now? I warn you that I shall not soon be done."

"Go on, my daughter," Monsieur Randoulet answered, with a warm note of sympathy in his gentle voice. "The calls upon my time are few now; but even were they many I would listen to you willingly for as long as you please."

And then, beginning with their meeting in the stage-coach when La Jacarasse was carrying off the Comtessine to Paris, Lazuli told of Adeline's perils from that day onward in Paris and in Avignon—perils which still continued, since Calisto still was searching for her; and interwoven necessarily with this narrative was much about Pascalet and her own Vauclair.

Save for a question now and then, Monsieur Randoulet let her tell her story in her own way. But his tears fell as he listened; and old Janetoun kept up at first such a series of groans and exclamations that she had to be silenced. After that she listened quietly, standing in a corner and from time to time wringing her old hands.

"And now, Monsieur le Curé," Lazuli exclaimed indignantly, when at last she had finished, "what do you think of all this? How is it possible that a God who is just and good can leave the breath in such wretches as La Jacarasse and Surto and Calisto? And how is it possible that the men of the Convention, sent

there by the people to put an end to tyranny, have become tyrants themselves? They are worse than tyrants! In the name of Liberty and Fraternity they rule over us, yet they make use of monsters who only care to rob and kill! In a pretty state of topsy-turveydom things are now—when we, the loyal Liberals and good Republicans, are treated as 'suspects'; when innocent people like this child here—with the very clothes on her back showing how kind and charitable she is—must hide themselves for fear of these unchained murderers' knives! Oh how, I say, can a wise and a merciful God let such things be!"

Speaking very quietly and calmly, Monsieur Randoulet made answer to Lazuli's outburst. "My daughter," he said, "I believe that all that has happened had to happen. I believe that God has willed it to happen because He is just and righteous. The great ones of the earth, the kings and the rich men in power, long enough have been suffered to drain the blood from the veins of the people. God wished to put an end to that injustice, and he raised the mighty tempest of the Revolution. When a fierce wind blows through the orchards both the green fruit and the ripe fruit are torn from the branches; and both, falling, are sorely bruised. So, also, the rushing storm of the Revolution, beating upon the unjust, has not spared the just wholly.

"Do not blame man for this. Man is the instrument of the Most High—but not a perfect instrument. Wrong has been done by these men of the Convention whom you would curse;

but they have done, they are doing, more right than wrong. They are making over our unjust laws into just laws. They are gathering armies to defend and to protect our land. The kings, the emperors, all the tyrants of the whole world, are banded together to destroy us. What is worse, for it is the shame of our country, the sons of France not only have deserted her in her peril, but are fighting against her. With the strangers who come to spoil our land come also Frenchmen—the runaway nobles come back to claim again their rights which were the people's wrongs. It is just that the heads of those rotten nobles should be cast down into the bloody mire. If injustice is done also, we must not complain. No, no, my daughter, repine not! The tempest of Almighty God is blowing through the land. His will be done! His scales will weigh the guilty, and they will not escape. Those who seek to kill this innocent child that they may keep safely their stolen gain will come to their reckoning. They, and such as they, will perish by the fiery sword of God!"

Monsieur Randoulet was silent for a moment when he had ended this impassioned utterance; and then, speaking in a quieter tone, continued: "And now for you, my dear children, from this time forth my house is your home. All that is mine is yours. I regret only that I have so little to offer you—but I have fallen, as many others have fallen, upon evil times."

"I knew that we had knocked at a door that would open wide to us," Lazuli answered, in a voice that trembled because Monsieur Ran-

doulet's warm charity touched her to the very heart. "But it is not for all of us that I ask refuge—only for this dear persecuted child. And it is enough that you shelter her; she must not be a burden on you too. Only this morning, Monsieur le Curé, my husband left me that he might go off to fight for the Republic in the army of the Pyrenees. But he did not leave me quite in poverty. Mite by mite, we have saved up some sous; and all that he saved he gave to me for our baby and for our Adeline. 'Keep it all,' he said, 'for you'll need it for yourself and the children. As for me, never fear but I'll find wells enough for my thirst and crusts enough for my hunger. Why, just fighting for country and for liberty is food and drink for a man in these days!' Not a sou would he take, my brave good man, my patriot—not a single sou! And so, Monsieur le Curé, what my Vauclair left with me for Adeline I leave here with you."

And then, as she fumbled in her pocket, Lazuli fairly broke down—sobbing and weeping like the Magdalen at the thought of leaving Adeline, and of Monsieur Randoulet's goodness, and of the hurt of her parting with her Vauclair. Still in tears, she drew out a handkerchief knotted at the corner; and when the knot was loosened laid upon the table a little heap of silver coin.

All this so moved Jean Caritous that suddenly he burst out crying too—big tears rolling down his nose while his hand went to his pocket under the skirt of his blouse. "Don't mind my going on this way, please,

Monsieur le Curé," he said. "I'm no cry-baby, but somehow you're so good and so kind, and you say such beautiful things, that it's more than I can stand! And you sha'n't take the bread out of your own mouth to feed our little dear if I can help it. I've carted her from Paris to Avignon, and I've carted her from Avignon here, and every hour that I've been with her I've grown to be more fond of her—until now she's come to be dearer to me than the light of my own eyes. And so, Monsieur le Curé, I'll just leave with you for her what I have in my bag. I wish there was more to leave. But I'll manage to send some more later on." As Jean pulled out his purse his tears streamed down upon his blouse, and his big coarse hands so shook that he had trouble in untying the thong. But he got it loose at last, and poured out upon the table a little stream of silver pieces beside Lazuli's offering.

Monsieur Randoulet, rising, pushed away the silver spread out on the table before him. "Of what are you thinking!" he exclaimed. "Take it back! I do not need it. There are still, thank God, charitable folk about us here who will not let us suffer for lack of food. Take it back, I say."

Adeline also had risen. Clasping Lazuli in her arms she said brokenly: "Do you mean then to leave me, and to give me your last sou? No, no, dear Lazuli, that must not be. You must stay with me here, where we shall need little, and we will make our home in my Château de la Garde. In the Château there is room for all of us and to spare."

While this talk went on Janetoun scarcely could contain herself. She had the peasant's love for money, and she knew how bitterly money was needed just then. Adeline's speech was too much for her, and she broke out sharply: "Mademoiselle la Comtessine, I'm sorry to have to tell you that you haven't got any Château. This new government has got its claws on it. It isn't any longer yours at all. They are quite right, this Dame Lazuli and this man, in wanting to leave here for you a few sous."

"Come, come, Janetoun," said Monsieur Randoulet, "where there's enough for two there's enough for three. We do not need that money. We can get along without it, never fear."

"That's all very well for you to say, Monsieur le Curé," Janetoun answered; "but I who make the pot boil know what goes into the pot. Many a time I split a clove of garlic so that I can make our broth with it for two days, and I cut our bread into wafer slices to make one loaf last as long as two." As she spoke, she was sidling toward the table, with her apron held up by the corners, devouring the money with her sharp old eyes.

Jean Caritous settled the matter in his own way. With one of his big hands he swept the money off the table into the other, and then flung the whole of it into Janetoun's apron. Her eyes gleamed as it jingled there. In an instant, tightly clutching her apron, she had vanished behind the curtain of the alcove.

"Janetoun! Janetoun!" Monsieur Randou-

:t called after her, "this won't do at all! Bring ack that money. These good folks need it ıemselves!" But she paid no attention to his rder. They could hear the rustling she made bout the bed as she hid away her lean treasure ıfely in the straw.

CHAPTER VII

THE PARTING AT MALEMORT

LAZULI's heart was heavy, for at last the moment had come when she and Adeline must part. Very tenderly she took the young girl in her arms.

"My darling child," she said, "I must leave you now, but you know that it is not of my own wish that I go. It is for your safety. You can be safely hidden here alone, but if Clairet and Joy and I staid in Malemort, it would be to your peril. That wretch who is tracking you surely would find you again. And so we are going away from you—to Malaucène, where my own people are. There I shall stay until these cruel times are ended, and then I will come for you again. And do not fear that I shall not find you, for I am leaving you in kind and holy guard. You will be close in my heart all the time, and I am sure I shall be close in yours. And when the better times come, as they surely will come, Vauclair and I will care for you—for we look upon you as our own dear child. If what Janetoun says is true, if your house and your lands have been taken away from you, you still shall not want for a home. Never fear but that we will work for you, just as we shall work for our own Clairet."

At this mention of his own name the bewildered thoughts in Clairet's little head took form in speech, and he piped up suddenly: "I won't give my sister Adeline to Monsieur le Curé!" and with an outburst of tears he caught Adeline in his little arms.

Too broken for words, Adeline pressed the child to her breast and covered him with kisses. Then she embraced the others—old Joy, so stunned with all these strange doings that she was speechless; big Jean Caritous, who fairly blubbered like a child; and at last Lazuli again. Close-clasped they held each other, weeping—until at last, gently loosening the poor child's hold, Lazuli turned to go. That she might not see them leaving her, Adeline bent down over the table, sobbing, her face in her hands. But she could hear, though she could not see, and the simple words of parting cut her like knives.

"Good-bye, good friends," said Monsieur Randoulet in his kind voice. "God care for you on your journey. Take shelter early. Do not let nightfall overtake you on the road."

"Thank you, Monsieur le Curé. We shall be prudent. Do not fear for us," Lazuli answered. "And you, I trust you to watch over my dear child. The bundle on the table has her own clothes in it—her right dress as a girl. If she sorrows too bitterly you must get word to me, and I will manage somehow to come to her. You will promise to get word to me, Monsieur?"

"I promise, my daughter. God be with all of you. Adessias!" And the door closed. Outside, for a moment, was the sharp clicking

of Jean's hob-nailed shoes on the cobble-stones. Then all was still.

Old Janetoun, come back from hiding the silver in Monsieur le Curé's straw mattress, saw the bundle lying on the table and was more interested in it than in the sobbing girl to whom it belonged. Like all of her sex, Janetoun was full of curiosity. Presently she had her hands upon the bundle, feeling it searchingly; and then, as she could make nothing of it that way, she loosened the string and opened it. All that she found was a plain little black frock and some linen, and she threw the garments down on the table with a sniff that seemed to say: "Well, is that all!"

But as the frock fell upon the table there was a clear jingling sound, not to be mistaken, that made the covetous old creature snatch it up again and search in the pocket eagerly. And there she found three silver crowns—the very three crowns that Pascalet had received when he enlisted in the army of the Republic, and that he had sent by William the Patriot to Vauclair! At that instant Monsieur Randoulet turned, and saw her with the bundle open before her. "What are you doing there, Janetoun?" he asked.

"Only looking at this old frock, and the tatters that are with it, Monsieur."

"They must be hidden away carefully, Janetoun. Mademoiselle Adeline has come here dressed as a boy, and as a boy she must for the present remain. But that dress must be kept safely in case she should need it again."

"Certainly, Monsieur," Janetoun answered

submissively. "I will put it away most carefully. Your orders shall be obeyed." As she spoke, she began to fold up the little frock again —when Monsieur Randoulet caught the glint of the silver pieces only partly hidden in her hand.

"What's that in your hand, Janetoun?" he asked.

"That? Oh, nothing worth speaking about. Just a piece or two of money that I found. Nothing at all."

"Where did you find it?" Monsieur Randoulet went on, in a tone most unusually and most uncomfortably stern.

"It was in the pocket of this old frock, Monsieur!"

As Adeline heard this, and realized suddenly that Janetoun had taken possession of those precious three crowns which had come from Pascalet, her first impulse was to spring upon the old woman and snatch them away from her. She half rose—and then, ashamed of her impulse, she dropped her head into her hands again and said piteously: "Oh please don't take my three crowns from me!"

"Give back to Mademoiselle her money! Give it back to her instantly!" cried Monsieur Randoulet with such energy that he fairly made old Janetoun jump.

"No, no, Monsieur le Curé," said Adeline, her head still in her hands, "let Janetoun keep it. I did wrong in asking for it back again."

"You did right in asking for it, my child, for it is yours. Do not think for a moment that I would even dream of allowing to be taken

away from you what is your own. God knows that the day may come soon when you will need those three crowns."

"It is not as money, Monsieur, that I am thinking of them," sighed Adeline. "They have another value to me. They are more to me than all the money in the world!"

Monsieur Randoulet did not pry into Adeline's mystery. Stroking her head gently he said: "Well, they are safe now. See, Janetoun has put them back into the pocket of your frock again, and there they shall stay safely. And now dry your eyes, my daughter, and we will take a little walk together before the setting of the sun. A walk in these quiet fields in harvest time, here in your own birthplace, will take the fever out of your blood and give you rest."

The thought of a walk in the fields in full harvest time, and in these dear fields of her own, acted like magic upon Adeline. She stood up instantly, and smiling through her tears exclaimed: "And may we walk toward La Garde?"

"Certainly, my child, if you wish to."

"You are very good to take me there, Monsieur le Curé. I long to see my own home again."

"I cannot take you to see it quite as you mean, my child. We can only walk round about it. You forget that no one must know who you are. God keep you from being recognised—and you might be if we went to the Château."

Adeline's face clouded for a moment, and then brightened again. "But we may go to

the hut of La Garde—where the Pascals live—may we not?"

"We had better not do that either, to-day," Monsieur Randoulet answered. "To-day we will take no risks, and by what happens we will know what will be safe to do later. And now let us be off."

As he spoke, Monsieur Randoulet picked up his breviary, and then they went out together into the little town. Presently they passed in front of the church, where the Curé paused for a moment, and crossed himself.

"See, my child," he said sadly, "my church is closed to me. I no longer am permitted to say mass there. The clubs meet in the church, and what was my own house has been turned into a prison. Alas! alas! Oh God that such a change should come!"

With his little clerk beside him the good Curé went on in sad silence—out through the gate of St. Felix and then, to Adeline's delight, upward by the Pramàri road toward La Garde. Her heart thrilled as she trod again that stony road over which she had passed so often—sometimes on foot, sometimes riding, sometimes in the great coach. Every flower, every bush, every tree, even the very stones of that road, were dear to her! She could have kissed the field poppies on the roadside, glowing rich red in the rays of the sun, and the other flowers which she gathered. The blackberries which she plucked from the hedge-tangle had the sweet taste of home. And through the hedges she peered eagerly, hoping to catch a glimpse of the hut in which her Pascalet had lived.

Monsieur le Curé had opened his breviary and was reading it almost aloud. He walked very slowly, that he might not stumble against the stones or into the ruts of the rough road. From time to time he looked up to heaven and crossed himself on his lips with his thumb. The last prayer in his service he said aloud, kneeling on the stony ground.

They were high up on the hillside, far above the village. Adeline, who had run on ahead, stopped in the road and waited for him to finish his prayer and join her again; and while she waited gazed out over the great plain, that had the look of being flecked with gold-dust as it lay in the light of the low-hanging sun. Suddenly, with the skip of a little kid, she mounted the roadside bank and clapped her hands in delight as she exclaimed: "I see them! Look, Monsieur le Curé! Look!"

"What is it, my child?" Monsieur Randoulet asked as he came toward her. "What do you see that makes you so happy?"

"There! there!" Adeline answered, pointing eagerly. "There on the road beyond the village, a long way off. Don't you see?"

"See what, my child?" M. Randoulet asked as he mounted the bank and stood beside her, and shading his eyes with his hand from the nearly level sun-rays looked in the direction in which she pointed.

"It is the cart, Monsieur. It is Jean's cart. Lazuli and Clairet are in it, and dear old Joy!"

"Truly, I do see a cart," said Monsieur Randoulet slowly. "Do you think it is Jean's?"

"I am sure of it. See, it is covered, and it

has two horses, and as the sun strikes it you can see it is blue. Oh yes, it certainly is his!" And Adeline stood watching the distant cart, her heart throbbing with both joy and sorrow as she thought of the dear ones who were leaving her and as she wondered if ever she would see them again. Then the cart dipped in among the almond trees around the base of the hill of Serre; showed again for a moment—and then was gone!

As she turned with a long sigh, Monsieur Randoulet laid his hand on her arm gently. "Come child," he said. "Since you so long to see Pascal's hut we will, at least, walk past it. But we cannot stop there, and we must go on quickly, for the sun will soon be down. Remember," he added warningly, "we are only to say good day in passing. We cannot stop to talk; and, above all, you must not give the least sign of who you are."

From the road they turned into a narrow path that wound up among the olive trees. Long shadows lay about them. The goats, tethered here and there beside the grass-grown faces of the terraces, bleated as they came near —for goat bedtime was at hand and the people from the village soon would be coming to take the creatures home. Below the orchards were the harvest fields, where work for the day was almost at an end. A few peasants still were tying and shocking the last sheaves. More were under the oaks, getting together their coats and water-bottles and wallets. Some already had started for the village in little groups: the panniered ass ahead, the man with

his sickle on his shoulder following, behind him his wife, the children leading the goat in the rear—all going down the narrow pathways in single file through the level sun-rays.

Adeline's heart beat faster and faster as they drew near and nearer to the hut of La Garde—her Pascalet's home! Through the olive vistas she could see, rising from among the great elms and oaks, the red-tiled roof and turrets of the Château. From time to time the harsh cry of the white peacocks there sounded through the silence of sunset. Over the trees she saw the pigeons flying backward and forward before settling for the night—flashing out red-gold in the sunshine, turning to blue-black in the shadows, and then flashing out red-gold again as they whirled once more into the sunshine and came in sweeping curves to perch on the glazed tiles roofing the pigeon-tower. As they sat there, beating their wings in the last blood-red sun-rays, it seemed as though the high shining peak of the tower had burst into a flutter of flame.

And so, surrounded by these home sights which filled her heart with mingled joy and sorrow, and with an undercurrent of sweet thoughts about her Pascalet, she went onward with Monsieur Randoulet toward the hut of La Garde.

CHAPTER VIII

LA PATINE AND OLD PASCAL

"GOD be with you, La Patine!" Monsieur Randoulet called out cordially, as they passed in front of the open door of the hut and saw Pascalet's mother bending over the fire-place within. But he walked on without stopping, leading Adeline by the hand.

This was not at all to La Patine's liking. Her life was a lonely one up there on the hillside, where rarely a soul came near her, and she dearly loved a chance to talk. Leaving her pot to boil itself, she bustled to the doorway, crying out: "Dear! Dear! Is that you, Monsieur le Curé? Why, how fast you walk! Surely you can stop for a moment. Just think how long it is since I've laid eyes on you!"

Monsieur Randoulet halted, but answered over his shoulder without turning: "It's getting late, my good Patine. I must hurry home. I no longer have twenty-year legs, you know. It does not do for me to go stumbling along these rough paths after dark."

But La Patine, who was not to be put off with excuses, came toward them. "And so," she said, looking at Adeline, "you have caught a little clerk."

"Yes, I have caught a little clerk," Monsieur

Randoulet answered. As he spoke he put his arm on Adeline's shoulder and drew her toward him; seeking in that way, under cover of a caress, to hide her face.

La Patine came closer. "What a dear little boy he is!" she said. "But he is as pale and delicate looking as a young lady." And then she sighed sadly and added: "Whenever I see a boy of about that age, a nice boy like this one, it seems to me that I see my own Pascalet! Ah me, who knows where that poor innocent is now!"

"God is guarding him," Monsieur Randoulet answered. "He will send him safe back to you. Some day when you least are expecting him, back he will come—proud as Artaban and gay and well!"

"God grant it!" La Patine said reverently, and as she spoke she stroked Adeline's cheek. The young girl thrilled with her touch and longed to kiss her rough old hand. "Tell me, my pretty boy, do you know how to sing the mass?" she asked.

"It does not make much difference whether he knows or not," Monsieur Randoulet interposed quickly, fearful that Adeline's voice would betray her. "There is no mass to sing, now. God's home no longer is for God's servants. It is the home of those who hearken not to his word."

La Patine looked affectionately at Adeline—this boy who made her think of her own Pascalet. She fumbled in her pocket for something that she might give to him. There was little in her pocket—only two acorns and a nut and a

dry bean. She had found them and was treasuring them against some day when she should have no other food. But she was shy about making her poor little gift; and presently Monsieur Randoulet moved on with Adeline and said: "Well, well. Good-bye, La Patine. We shall see you another day."

Then she plucked up courage, and drawing the nut from her pocket said: "Here, my pretty boy. This is all that I have to give you, this single nut. But it is a good nut. So here it is for you."

"Thank you!" said Adeline in a trembling voice—and then she and Monsieur Randoulet walked on.

La Patine stood watching them, puzzled—until a hissing sound inside the hut made her run quickly to the fire-place to safeguard her over-boiling pot of vetches. But as she lifted the pot off the fire she muttered to herself, still puzzled: "Surely I've seen that face somewhere, and surely I've heard that voice!"

Adeline and Monsieur Randoulet hurried downward along the stony path. Far off, at the end of the great plain, the sun was setting. Only half of it remained above the horizon—arching like a huge fiery bridge over the crest of the Cévennes.

Among the olive-trees, coming home from his gleaning, they met La Patine's husband, old Pascal. All day long, hungry and thirsty, he had gleaned in the hot sunshine behind the binders. On his shoulder was the poor little sheaf that he had gathered—the few grains which he had saved from the ants and the field-

mice and the birds. It was a very lean sheaf, but from it would be made the best bread of his year. As he came close to Monsieur Randoulet and his little clerk he stepped out from the path to make way for them, holding his cap in his hand and bending his head reverently as he said: "Good evening to you, Monsieur le Curé—to you and your company."

"God be with you, Father Pascal!" Monsieur Randoulet answered, and they passed on.

Adeline longed to call "Adessias!" after him, but the sight of his scarred old face had brought such a lump into her throat that she could not speak. For those scars were the traces of the cruel whip-strokes which her own brother and Surto had given the poor old man only a year before! The pity of it wrung her heart.

In silence they went onward—hurrying through the olive orchards, and hurrying still faster when they came out on the wide Pramàri road. Dark was upon them, and Monsieur Randoulet was eager to get home before darkness fell.

"But surely, Monsieur," Adeline said, "there is no danger here from the bad people of the Revolution?"

"Do not call the Revolutionists bad, my child," the Curé answered. "The Revolution is necessary and right, and there is nothing to fear from those who are loyal to its principles: they are carrying out the commandment of God! Whom I fear are others of a very different sort: the men who are seeking to destroy God's good work, to undo what the Revolutionists have done. There are many of these—men like Surto

and Calisto des Sablées, who were Aristocrats yesterday and who will be Aristocrats again to-morrow if the wind turns that way; men who take advantage of these troublous times to further their own ends by any sort of crime. Them I fear greatly, and the more because the honest men of the country are not here to stay their hands. You must remember, my child, that almost every patriot who can carry a gun is fighting on our frontiers. The flower and the strength of France is at war with the foreigners who seek to conquer us—only the feeble and the old remain at home. That is why we are at the mercy of these criminals who oppress us—hypocrites who shelter themselves under liberty caps, cowards who hide away in the forests that they may not have to fight against our country's enemies, Aristocrats who bide their time. These prowl by night like wolves, robbing and murdering; these serve the cause of the Tyrant to whom we owe every one of the many bitter troubles which are weighing us down to-day; these are the pursuers of such innocents as you and Lazuli; these are they who are ready to drown France in blood in order to set up the Tyrant again and to bring us once more under the heel of a despot ruling by brute force! But let us not blame, for the sins of these wretches, the patriots of the Convention—whom God has commissioned to give back to the people their liberty and their rights; let us not condemn the Revolutionists because with the great rights they have won for us we must suffer for a season a few wrongs."

As Monsieur Randoulet ceased speaking they passed through the gate of Saint Felix, and pres-

ently were come safely to the forlorn little house again. Janetoun was awaiting them anxiously, knowing all the perils which might beset them after nightfall in those dangerous times. She was the very soul of faithfulness, this old woman, in spite of her grasping nature and her rough tongue. To save her master, she would have faced bravely the National Knife.

"Well, this is a pretty time o' day to be coming home!" she said crossly.

"There, there, Janetoun, don't scold us," Monsieur Randoulet answered. "The wolves haven't eaten us. Here we are."

"No, the wolves haven't eaten you," the old woman grumbled, "but it's more by good luck than good management that they haven't. What's the good of being out at night when you don't have to?—it's bad enough when your holy duties call you abroad!"

Monsieur Randoulet laid his finger on his lips and frowned. "We will not talk about those matters," he said. And as Janetoun stopped short he added: "Are your chick-peas well cooked and ready for us?"

"I don't know how well cooked they are, but they're ready for you," she answered sourly: and as she spoke she poured the reddish soup from the pot into a dish in which were slices of black bread.

"Let us thank God we have good teeth, my child!" Monsieur Randoulet said with a smile to Adeline. But before Adeline could answer him Janetoun broke in with: "Good teeth, indeed, Monsieur le Curé! So that's the way you talk about my cooking! And those peas soaked in

lye and boiled in rain water! Why, they'll fairly melt in your mouth!"

And so they did, and Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline made a good meal upon them, washed down with cool water fresh from the well. It all was in sharp contrast with the old curacy, where both larder and cellar always had been well filled and where there had been always the fragrance of incense mingled with an appetizing kitchen smell. But there was enough of wholesome food to stay their hunger, and it was sweetened by Monsieur Randoulet's gentle gaiety and the kind words coming from his good heart.

Tired out after her sleepless night and her long day of journeying and excitement, Adeline's eyes were blinking before she fairly had finished her simple meal. "Now you must be off to sleep, my child," the Curé said. "But first we will pray." Standing, and the others standing with him, he said the prayer, "Pater noster qui es in cœli"—to which, when it was ended, Adeline and Janetoun together said "Amen!" And then he made with his thumb upon Adeline's forehead the sign of the cross. "Sleep soundly, my child," he said. "Tomorrow we will take another walk in the fields among God's beautiful flowers."

Adeline kissed his kind hand, and as he left them and went behind the white curtains into his little alcove Janetoun spread a mattress upon the floor. "That's for you, Mademoiselle," she said shortly. "As for me, I'll sleep in my big armchair." And without another word she blew out the light.

Feeling her way in the dark, Adeline stretched herself upon the mattress. But no sooner was she at rest than the sleep which had been weighing upon her vanished and she was wide awake. For a few minutes there were little sounds about her—Monsieur Randoulet moving in his alcove, Janetoun settling herself in her chair—then all was silent save their regular breathing telling that they slept. The church clock struck the hour. From the street came a faint sound of footsteps. Then, for a long while, silence. As she grew used to the very faint light she could see dimly the white curtains of the alcove, and then the shadowy figure of Janetoun asleep in her chair. Ten o'clock struck—eleven—midnight! "Oh heavens," said the poor child to herself, "shall I never fall asleep!"

She tried not to think—but thoughts went racing through her mind: of Lazuli and Clairet and Caritous and old Joy; of Calisto and Surto and La Jacarasse—setting her to shivering with fright; and then came a sweet vision of herself and Pascalet—Pascalet come back from the wars and living with her in the Château de la Garde. This comforting vision brought to her mind her visit that afternoon to Pascalet's mother, and she remembered the nut that La Patine had given her. Slipping her hand gently into the pocket of her jacket she found the nut and brought it to her lips and kissed it. It made company for her; it soothed her; at last she felt herself dropping away into sleep.

CHAPTER IX

STRANGE FLITTINGS IN THE NIGHT

SUDDENLY Adeline was wide awake again—startled by hearing Monsieur Randoulet moving in his alcove. A moment later she heard Janetoun moving also; and dimly saw the old woman rising from her chair, stretching herself, and then tying up her petticoat and setting her cap straight as though morning had come. But Adeline knew that morning had not come. Only a little while before she had heard the clock strike twelve. What could it mean? she wondered. But she did not speak nor move.

In a few minutes Monsieur Randoulet came out from his alcove dressed—but dressed in so extraordinary a costume that Adeline said to herself: "I am not seeing straight because of the darkness—or else it is a dream!" For the good Curé, instead of wearing his coat and his neat knee-breeches, was dressed in woman's clothes! He took a big staff from the corner, and Janetoun threw a shawl over his shoulders; and then the two, without speaking, tip-toed to the door, opened it softly, and as softly closed it behind them. She heard them creeping down the stair; heard the outer door very softly opened and closed again; and then all was still! With a little gasp, she drew the covers over her head

and lay trembling—full of fear at finding herself thus strangely alone.

"Where can they have gone?" she thought. "No one came for them. No one called. And why was he dressed as a woman? What was the big stick for? Are they leaving me? Do they want to forsake me? Oh, no, no—that is not possible! Had they been like that, Lazuli would not have left me with them. And Monsieur Randoulet is a very saint—he never would let me come to harm! And yet——" And then the poor child cried out in the darkness: "O God, have mercy on me!" and fell to shaking again with fear.

The clock struck one—then, an age later, two. The hours seemed interminable. From time to time she pushed the covers from about her head to see if day were coming—and drew them up again quickly that she might shut away the darkness from her eyes. She tried to think out what she should do should daylight come and find her still forsaken. But she could come to no conclusion. At first she planned to go to La Patine—telling about the friendship that was between herself and Pascalet, and for Pascalet's sake asking shelter. But that project had to be given up when she remembered how poor they were, La Patine and Pascal; how, no matter how hard she worked, she still would be a burden upon them. Then the better thought came to her that she would go to Malaucène, to Lazuli and Joy. It was not so very far, she reflected. She could walk there in a day; or, at most, in a day and a night. Her only dread was that she might lose her way—and she tried to

remember all that she had heard Lazuli say and had heard Caritous say about the road.

And then, suddenly, as she lay thinking, she heard in the intense silence the very gentle opening of the outer door. Footsteps sounded on the stairs—so mingled with the thumping of her own heart that a whole crowd of people seemed to be ascending. Her head went under the covers again as the door of the room opened, and she lay rigid. In another instant she heard Monsieur Randoulet say in a very low voice: "The child never has wakened at all!" And to this Janetoun answered in a gruff whisper: "Young folks sleep like logs."

Adeline's fear was gone, but her wonder remained. Since their belief that she was asleep seemed to be a relief to them, she did not speak; but her mind was employed busily in trying to solve the mystery of their night-time flitting and of Monsieur Randoulet's strange disguise. Try as she might, she could make neither head nor tail of it all; and while she racked her brain over these strange doings Monsieur Randoulet quietly went back to his alcove again, and Janetoun settled herself again in her chair. To Adeline's simple and straightforward mind the thought did not occur that good deeds sometimes must be done in deep secrecy: and because what she had seen was so unaccountable a flock of evil suspicions assailed her which she could not drive away—though she grew angry with herself because she harboured them.

Then, in the silence, she heard Monsieur Randoulet moving in his bed as one who cannot sleep, and presently heard him murmuring

very softly: "Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name—" and so onward to the end of that first and all-inclusive Christian prayer. That sufficed to still all her doubts and to give her peace. With a long sigh, her tense mind and rigid body relaxed and a holy calm came into and possessed her heart. Her weariness asserted itself. In another moment, smiling at the angels, she fell into a deep sweet sleep.

When she awoke, broad daylight had come and Janetoun was at work setting the house in order for the day. Through her half-opened eyes she saw Monsieur Randoulet sitting at the open window reading his breviary. From outside came a great chirping and twittering from a swallow's nest under the eaves—where a brood of little swallows, almost fledged, were getting their breakfasts. What with the going and coming of the father and mother, and the talk of all the family, it seemed as though she were hearing the clatter of a whole town of birds. Only the sturdy sleep of youth and innocence could have gone on amidst such noises, and the noises that Janetoun was making too. All the doubts and terrors of the night were forgotten as Adeline looked upon the Curé's kind good face, and heard his kindly greeting when he saw that she was awake at last, and had his morning blessing before Janetoun gave her her morning meal.

The day passed quietly. They remained in the house until late in the afternoon, when M. Randoulet took her for a walk. Again they passed by the hut of La Patine, and again La Patine was sorely disappointed because they

would not stop and give her a chance to wag her tongue with them—and was only partly consoled by the promise that they would come and pay her a good long visit soon. Returning, they had their supper of soup and bread; and when Janetoun had settled matters for the night they disposed themselves as before: Adeline on her mattress, Monsieur Randoulet in his alcove, and Janetoun in her chair.

Adeline fell asleep, but with a haunting memory of the strange doings of the previous night that disposed her to waken easily. When she had been asleep for some hours, as it seemed to her, her wakening came. Again she heard Monsieur Randoulet and Janetoun stirring; again dimly saw the Curé emerge from his alcove in woman's dress with his big staff in his hand; again saw Janetoun throw the shawl over his shoulders; and again saw them softly steal away together into the night. A shiver of fear ran through her because of the strangeness of it all; but she was sure that they would come back to her, and so escaped the agony of dread which had racked her the night before. With a little prayer now and then, that soothed and comforted her, she waited through the hours of their absence; and fell asleep calmly when at last they returned. Again she slumbered until Janetoun and the swallows waked her, long after broad day had come; and again, as she opened her eyes, she saw Monsieur Randoulet seated at the window reading his breviary —the swallows whirling outside in the sunshine making a flashing of light that seemed like a halo about the holy man's head.

So the days went by peacefully, and the nights strangely, until near a month had passed. Adeline grew accustomed to Monsieur Randoulet's and Janetoun's night-flittings, and while she did not cease to wonder about them they no longer caused her anxiety or fear. One regret she had, and that was a keen one: that the Curé did not take her to pay the promised visit to La Patine—whose gentle-heartedness made her think of Lazuli, and with whom she longed to talk about Pascalet. But she did not venture to ask that this visit which she so yearned for might be paid.

One night their ordinary routine was broken in upon. After they had prayed together, as usual, Monsieur Randoulet paused before going into his alcove and said to Adeline: "My child, almost a month has passed since you came here, and in all that time you have not heard the holy mass. To-morrow will be the Feast of Our Lady of August, and you shall go with me to the service that I shall hold. Now sleep soon, and soundly, for your sleep must be short."

This promise so delighted Adeline that she skipped for gladness like a little kid. "Oh thank you, Monsieur," she exclaimed; and she would have gone on eagerly to ask questions had not Monsieur Randoulet retired into his alcove, and had not Janetoun promptly put out the light. Her excitement kept her from obeying the Curé's injunction to go to sleep quickly; and at midnight she waked of her own accord —as she did usually when the others arose to go upon their mysterious expeditions. But, as usual, she lay silent. Presently she dimly saw

Monsieur Randoulet come out from his alcove, but wearing his own priestly dress—not woman's clothes. And then her shoulder was grasped and she was shaken roughly, and a rough voice said: "Come now, get up at once!"

Adeline jumped up with a scream; and then, recognising Janetoun's voice, but still startled, asked fearfully: "What is it? What is the matter?"

"There is nothing to frighten you, my child," Monsieur Randoulet said gently. "But you must get up now and come with us. Don't you remember what I told you before you went to sleep? We are going to the holy mass of our Lady of August. Get up, my child."

Being thus reassured, and fully awake, Adeline hurriedly began to put on her jacket. But Monsieur Randoulet stopped her. "No," he said, "you need not be dressed as a boy to-night. Put on your frock. It will be safe. We shall be back again before dawn."

"At this rate, we'll never get off at all!" Janetoun grumbled, as she went to the chest to bring out Adeline's bundle. But with the old woman's help—while Monsieur Randoulet knelt in the alcove, reciting his credo and saying his morning prayer—the young girl slipped so quickly into her frock that she was ready when the Curé rose from his knees.

Together they went out softly into the starlit night; groping their way through the narrow streets—dark as pockets—but easily making out their path by the star-shine when they had come out upon the open country-side. Adeline did

not venture for some time to ask any questions, but in her heart she wondered greatly where they could be going: for she knew that outside of the village there was not even a chapel, still less a church, for miles and miles. This puzzle held by her as they went onward, silently, through the quiet fields. The roadside crickets chirped at a great rate. Off in the valleys nightingales were singing. Now and then from a farmhouse came the barking of a dog. Once they heard the dismal hooting of an owl. At last, when they turned from the broad path that they had been following into a narrow rough way leading up the hillside of the Castelnau, her curiosity got the better of her discretion. "Is the church far off?" she asked.

"No talking!" Janetoun said in a cross whisper.

"We'll soon be there now, my child," Monsieur Randoulet answered, speaking in a very low tone.

Up the steep ascent they went in single file, the Curé leading and Janetoun in the rear, between thickets of thorny dwarf-oaks and tufts of flowery broom. The higher that they mounted the narrower became the path, and the thicker the tangle through which it ran. At last it stopped short, in front of a clump of bushes overgrowing a long-ruined and forgotten sheep-fold. The roof covering one end of the ruin still remained. This was the church!

In the sheltered corner, on the stone where of old the shepherds had spread salt for their sheep, a candle was burning, and before this improvised altar knelt a group of peasants, more

women than men, waiting for the mass to begin. As Monsieur Randoulet entered the ruin one of the women arose, and from a basket brought out a bottle of wine, a slice of white bread, and a tall glass goblet. These she placed upon the altar. And then, with old Janetoun serving as his clerk, the good Curé said the mass of our Lady of August in the midst of that little flock of faithful ones, before that strange altar around which through the centuries flocks of another sort had gathered to receive their dole of salt.

Quickly, but with all reverence, the service was concluded; and when it was ended the candle was extinguished and the little congregation vanished away silently into the darkness of the night. Back again down the narrow path, and thence through the fields and the olive orchards, Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline and Janetoun returned to Malemort. Far off over the mountain tops the pale light of dawn was glimmering as they entered safely their poor little home.

CHAPTER X

THE VISIT TO PASCAL AND LA PATINE

BEFORE she lay down to rest, in the grey dawn, Monsieur Randoulet told Adeline that he would take her that day to pay the visit to La Patine to which she had been looking forward so eagerly; and this delightful promise, and the excitement following her strange night, kept sleep from her eyes. But she was not weary. The thought of a long visit to Pascalet's mother, and of the talk that they surely would have together about Pascalet, gave her sweet rest through the exquisite solace that filled her heart.

She lay quite still upon her little bed, watching the window brightening in the dawn. Presently the swallows woke up, and she heard their drowsy twitterings. Then she saw the old birds fly away, foraging for a breakfast for their little ones, as the first sun-ray fell upon their nest beneath the eaves. Because of the loving thoughts that filled her heart, making peace and happiness there, her love went out to those happy little birds.

As the daylight filled the room she saw a big bundle upon the table wrapped up in Janetoun's apron, and fell to wondering what it was. Then she remembered that Janetoun had gone about among the little congregation the night

before, while the last prayer was being said. as though making some sort of a collection. What she had collected no doubt was in the apron, Adeline thought—but that did not explain what was there.

In a moment or two her curiosity was satisfied. When the swallows began to twitter, but before the noise they made had aroused Monsieur Randoulet, Janetoun stirred in her chair, stretched herself a little, sat up slowly—and then went quickly to the table and untied her apron. That Adeline should be awake, and watching her, evidently did not cross her mind. The bundle being opened, Adeline saw a little heap of vegetables, a great loaf of white bread, a melon, and a bottle of wine. These the old woman took hurriedly to the cupboard and there stowed away. She moved very softly, but not so softly but that Monsieur Randoulet was aroused. Looking out between the curtains he saw what she was doing, and said sharply: "Janetoun, you have been levying tribute upon my poor people again. I have told you that you must not do that."

Janetoun was disconcerted by the Curé's discovery, but answered crossly: "It's all very well for you to give your orders. But it is I, not you, who must keep the pot boiling."

"I have told you," Monsieur Randoulet repeated, "that you must ask nothing from these poor people."

"Poor people, indeed!" Janetoun grumbled. "And what are you? Can anybody be poorer than you are now? Anyway, I can't make you soup out of stones!"

Giving up the argument, Monsieur Randoulet arose and came to his seat beside the window and betook himself to his breviary—while behind him the swallows flew back and forth, casting flying shadows upon his open book. In silence Janetoun went on with her morning work.

Soon, when the morning meal was finished, the Curé and Adeline set off for the hut of La Garde; taking with them some of the tribute that Janetoun had levied, stowed in a leather wallet, to serve for their midday meal.

Adeline was filled with happiness, for it seemed to her that this visit to Pascalet's mother was almost the same thing as a visit to Pascalet himself. And her heart was still more gladdened because she was carrying a present to La Patine that, for a while at least, would make her life and old Pascal's life easier. From the moment that the visit was planned, the child had cast about in her mind for some way of helping these poor people who had only black bread to live upon, and not enough even of that; and the good thought had occurred to her that she would give them her precious three crowns. After all, they were Pascalet's three crowns: and who could have a better right to them than his own father and mother? Therefore she hid her little treasure in the pocket of her jacket and set forth with Monsieur Randoulet joyfully: glad because of the happy day that was before her, and glad because of the good that she could do to these poor people whom she loved.

Remembering the old times, it seemed

strange to her, as they went upon their way, that nowhere were there any signs that this great feast day—the Feast of Our Lady of August—was being observed! No bells were ringing. The church was closed. Instead of clustering in the village in holiday dress, the people were at work as usual. As they passed through the fields the harvesting was going on. At the threshing floors the men were swinging their flails and the women were winnowing the grain. But Monsieur Randoulet was too broad-minded to take offence at an infraction of the merely human commandments of the church. As they passed the groups of workers he had kindly words for all of them, and asked with interest how the harvest was coming on. The answers to his greetings and to his questions also were kindly. But Adeline had another shock in hearing them address him as "Citizen Randoulet"—for the phrase "Monsieur le Curé" had no place in those strange new times.

What talk took place was no more than the interchange of greetings, and of questions and answers, as they walked on rapidly. Monsieur Randoulet did not wish to seem to be hiding Adeline; but neither did he wish the villagers to come to close quarters with her. The risk of her being recognised, in her boy's dress, was not great; but still it was a risk that had to be guarded against. Naturally, there had been a good deal of talk as to who this boy could be whom Citizen Randoulet had picked up. Some said that he was an émigré's son; others said that he was a bastard of the Avignon Legate. But as no one knew anything certainly, and as

the people of Malemort for the most part were well-disposed toward their late Curé, they were content—as we say here in Provence—to let the water run.

Having left the grain fields and entered the olive orchards, Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline met no one until they were come to the hut of La Garde—where they found Pascal and La Patine hard at work threshing out the little harvest of wheat that they had gleaned. Very meagre was their harvest, poor souls! But, such as it was, they were beating out the grain—threshing is too large a word for what they were doing—on a broad flat stone: Pascal with a stick, La Patine with one of her sabots, and it was pitiful to see how careful they were to pick up each single grain that happened to fall from their little threshing-floor to the ground! A whole tragedy of starvation was told in their eagerness to save each tiny scrap of food!

La Patine, who was not a dull woman, understood the meaning of the sorrowful smile on Monsieur Randoulet's face as he watched them, and was grateful for it. "We must be careful, Monsieur le Curé," she said. "We poor people cannot afford to let even a grain be lost."

"But it makes me sad, La Patine, to see you going down on your knees and searching for those single grains when I think of the many great granaries which are heaping full."

"Well, after all, Monsieur le Curé, those great granaries are all filled with many single grains. They must be gathered and saved, one at a time. And my old grandmother—God rest her soul!—

used to say that one grain of wheat was worth more than a whole loaf of bread, than very many loaves of bread, and that to waste it was a sin: because when you had eaten the bread that was the end of it; but from the wheat grain you could grow a spear of wheat, and from the spear a sheaf, and from the sheaf a shock—and so on until you grew enough to feed the whole world until the heavens fall."

"You are right, La Patine. Who throws a handful of wheat into the fire is more of a spendthrift than one who throws a handful of gold into the sea!"

"And my grandmother used to tell me, Monsieur," La Patine went on, "that in the old times the spears of wheat were much fuller and much longer than they are now. Why, she said that in the old times, in the very old times, the spears were the length of the whole blade—and a strange story she had to tell about the way in which they became small!"

While Monsieur Randoulet only smiled at La Patine's simplicity, Adeline—always eager to hear a story—broke in with: "And what was it that made the spears of wheat become small, La Patine?"

"Well, I only know what my old grandmother told me about it, and what she told was this: Once upon a time there was a woman who went with her husband to gather in their crops. They had a field of wheat as red as gold, and every blade was covered thick with grain from the top to the very ground. The woman had brought her baby with her, and she laid him on a woolen cloth in a nice shady place

under an olive tree, while she followed her husband with his sickle, and bound up the sheaves. After a while the baby began to cry, and the woman went to him—thinking that he was crying because he was hungry. But the baby was crying because he had soiled himself and the woolen cloth on which he lay. And what do you think that spendthrift woman did? She stripped one of the long beautiful blades from its root in the ground to within a handbreadth of its top, and used the blessed bearded grains as a brush to make things clean again. Now it happened that the good God was passing that way just then; and when he saw what the woman was doing he scolded her well for her wicked wastefulness. And then the woman—who didn't know that it was the good God who was scolding her—told him shortly to mind his own business and she would mind hers. And the good God said no more to her and passed on. But the next year, when the wheat grew again, it grew no more along the whole length of the blade. Only so much grew at the top of the blade, a mere hand-breadth, as the woman had left there—as it has grown ever since, and as it grows now. And then there was a famine in the land, the first famine that ever was known; and from that time onward there never has been wheat enough in the world for all the hungry mouths. For the good God does not forget, and in that way he punished that wasteful woman for her sin!"

La Patine was interested in her own story, but she was still more interested in Adeline's face—and she was cudgelling her brains to find out

where she had seen this boy, and where she had heard his familiar voice. But she could make nothing of it all, and was beginning to think that she would venture on a plain question—when another matter intervened that diverted her thoughts.

Adeline also had given to the curious folk-story a divided interest. While listening to it she had been gazing very intently at the lower slope of the hill below La Garde. Her look grew more and more anxious, and just as the story ended she went pale suddenly and cried out: "The gendarmes! The gendarmes!"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Monsieur Randoulet. "There is nothing to bring the gendarmes here. You must be mistaken, child!" But he rose hurriedly, and with a troubled face looked in the direction toward which Adeline pointed.

La Patine and Pascal went on quietly with their work. "I never have seen a gendarme about here yet," said La Patine; and added: "Robbers don't come prowling around the houses of the poor."

"No, I am not mistaken, Monsieur," Adeline answered. "Look where I am pointing. Look carefully. Do you see that olive-tree—that one higher than the rest, near the wall? Well, the gendarme I saw is on the path that comes out beside that tree. You will see him in a moment, now. There! There he comes! Look!"

"Yes, yes. I see him!" Monsieur Randoulet said excitedly. And then added, in a much calmer tone: "But he is not a gendarme,

my child, and we have nothing to fear. He is a soldier—not a National Guard, though; and not wearing a uniform that I know at all."

"A soldier!" cried La Patine, starting to her feet. "A soldier! And coming here! It's my Pascalet! It's my own Pascalet come home from the wars!"

At this old Pascal also jumped up. But when he had taken a look at the oncoming soldier he said in tones of conviction: "No, that's not our boy. He's too tall. And he hasn't our boy's walk."

"Pedasa!" exclaimed La Patine. "He's been growing since he went away."

"Oh, if it were Pascalet!" cried Adeline.

"It seems to me that he has only one arm," said Monsieur Randoulet. "Yes, I am sure he has only one arm. And I think he has a bandage about his head, too."

Adeline saw that Monsieur Randoulet was right, and gave a gasp that was almost a sob; while La Patine burst out: "Oh Mother of Heaven! My boy to come back to me with only one arm!" And she hid her face in her hands.

"I tell you it isn't our boy," old Pascal said with energy. "Look at him for yourself."

The man, coming onward at a good pace, had drawn close enough for them to see him plainly. La Patine took her head out of her hands for another look and exclaimed: "God be praised! Look at the big beard of him! It isn't my Pascalet at all!" And Adeline gave a long thankful sigh.

Then they waited in silence while the man came on.

CHAPTER XI

BRAVE MARGAN

"GREETING to you!" said the soldier as he joined them. "Fraternity—or Death!"

For all that he had a pock-marked face like a honey-comb, he was a fine-looking fellow, well set up and strong. He wore a cocked hat, a green uniform turned up with red, and white gaiters. His right sleeve hung empty, and under his cocked hat was a bandage across one eye. A soldier he looked, every inch of him—but a soldier who never would fight again!

"I think you must have mistaken your way, friend," Monsieur Randoulet said when they all had answered his greeting. "The path that you are on leads nowhere. This is the end of it."

"Mistaken my way, Citizen? Not a bit of it! Isn't this the hut of La Garde?"

"Why of course it is," La Patine answered.

"And perhaps you're La Patine?"

"You've said it."

"And this is your good man?"

"That's my Pascal."

"Well then, my marching orders were right, and so am I. And now for the other side. I am Margan of Marseilles—your son's comrade. He and I went up to Paris together

in the Marseilles Battalion; and then we went off together to fight foreigners in Holland—a God-forgotten country in the north, where there's snow all the year round. And here am I, now, come to give you news of how your youngster's getting on."

"He's not dead, then!" cried La Patine.

"Dead! Well, I should say he wasn't! He's as bright as a sword-blade and as lively as an eel!"

"But why didn't *he* come? Oh, my little Pascalet, I'll never see you again!" and La Patine broke forth into sobs.

"Sit down, good soldier," said Pascal, "and tell us what you have to tell about our boy."

"But first you must have some refreshment," put in Monsieur Randoulet. "A cool drink will comfort you after your hot walk."

"Pecaire!" exclaimed La Patine. "I've nothing to give you but water!"

"But we have something better than water in our wallet," Monsieur Randoulet answered—and as he spoke he brought forth the bottle of red wine that Janetoun had captured at the mass. In a moment it was opened; and in another moment Margan was giving it a long kiss that left it only half full!

"Ha! that's something worth swallowing!" the soldier said as he set down the bottle and wiped his mouth with the back of his one remaining hand. "That's not like the slops and soapsuds we got to drink up there in the North!"

"And you've brought us news of our boy?" said La Patine eagerly.

"Yes, and fresh news, too. Why, it's only

a month since I was talking to him, nose to nose, just as I'm talking to you now! We've been together, that boy and I, all through this past year—ever since the day that he enlisted in our Battalion in Avignon. We went up to Paris together, and we took King Capet prisoner together; and when that job was finished we went off together as volunteers to fight for the Republic up in the north. For six months we fought Austrians and Germans in that vile Holland. And we'd have been at it together yet if our General hadn't turned traitor. It's to him, that dirty dog of a Dumouriez, that I owe the loss of my arm and my eye!"

"Pecaire! how it must have hurt!" exclaimed La Patine. "And my Pascalet—was he wounded too?"

"Not a bit of it! He's always in the thick of the fighting, and yet he always manages to come out with a whole-skin. It looks as if he knew how to frighten the bullets away! Many a time we fellows have said, 'When the smoke clears away there'll be nothing of Pascalet left but scraps!'—and then the smoke would drift off, and there would be Pascalet as lively as a flea! And very likely a bullet hole through his hat, and his coat torn by bayonets and slashed by swords. Some of our fellows swear that he's bewitched!"

"Oh holy Mother of Heaven! My boy don't know what he's doing. They'll kill him for me, sure! What did he ever go into those armies for—away off there?" And again La Patine began to sob.

"I'd be glad to be there myself, all the same,"

said Margan. "If I'd only lost my eye I'd be at it yet, fighting for the Republic with the rest of them. But with my right arm gone, Sarnipabiènne! what can I do? If it had been the left arm, I'd have stuck to my trade. You see, that devil of a cannon ball passed me on the wrong side. And it went in a hurry, I can tell you! Why, Pascalet said to me 'Your arm's gone, Margan!' almost before I knew it myself."

"But how did you and Pascalet get into the army of the North at all?" asked Monsieur Randoulet. "How was it that you didn't stay in the Marseilles Battalion, and come home with it when it came home?"

"Well, you see, it was just a sudden notion that took hold of us when our heads were a bit askew. We enlisted on the very day that the Battalion started for home again. The afternoon before that day, when we'd got our marching orders and everything was settled, some of us went off on a spree—Pascalet and I and one or two more. We went it hard—sampling one dram-shop after another until we saw hens with three heads everywhere! By the time that night caught us we were all tangled up in the thick of Paris and didn't know which way to turn. We did manage to get back to the barracks at last, somehow or other, but Pascalet drifted off from us and got lost. We didn't know that he had not come back with us till the next morning; indeed we didn't know till the next morning that we'd got back ourselves.

"Well, the next morning Vauclair came hunting for him—it was Vauclair, you know,

who picked him up in Avignon when he was driven out from here, and he loved the boy dearly. Vauclair gave it to us hot for taking him off with us that way, and when I found what had come of it I felt pretty bad myself—and I made up my mind that as I'd helped to lose him I wouldn't leave Paris until I'd found him again. And so I went off to hunt for him, and I let the Battalion march without me while I hunted Paris high and low. I hunted and I hunted without finding him. Along in the afternoon I got all tired out, and went into a barrack that I happened to be passing to sit down and rest myself. And all of a sudden I heard Pascalet's voice—I was sure it was his voice singing the 'Marseillaise.' Round I turned like a flash—and, sure enough, there he was! The hugging that I gave him was near to cracking the ribs of him; and then I found what he was doing there—that he had joined that morning one of the new battalions of the Army of the North.

"'Come right along back with me to where you belong,' says I, 'and come home with the rest of us to Marseilles.'

"'No,' says he, like the brave patriot that he is, 'no, Margan, I've enlisted in the army of the Republic, and if you dare to say another word about my deserting—you're a dead man!' and he ups with his gun!

"'Right you are,' says I, 'and wrong I am! Vive la Révolution! Vive la République! Instead of my taking you back to Marseilles, you shall take me off to fight along with you for Liberty!' And with that I enlisted in the same

battalion—and within another hour Pascalet and I were off together for the northern frontier.

"What a march it was that we made to the Army of the North! In the early evening the brigade of which we were a part got away from Paris, Pascalet and I shouting out the 'Marseillaise.' The other fellows of our own battalion —Parisians, Normans, Bretons—at first only opened their mouths to laugh at us. But it didn't take long for the tune of our song to get into their heads and the fire of it into their bones, and we all were roaring it out together before we'd gone half a league. Through the darkness we marched singing; and when a thunder-storm came banging over us—with rain by the bucketful that drenched us through—we fairly outroared the thunder with our 'Marseillaise'! Not until toward morning—when we were pretty well dead beat with wet and cold—did we call a halt. And even then, chilled and drenched and hungry and tired out though we were, every little while a hoarse voice would croak:

'Aux armes citoyens! Formez vos bataillons!'

We made our halt under the lea of a stiff little hill close to the road side, along with a battalion of Maine-and-Loire men who led us on the march. We all were wet as frogs together, and when at last the sun came up we all gave a shout of joy. As for our breakfast, we made it mainly on shouting 'Vive la République!'—that really did seem filling, somehow—and on the sunshine that set our jackets to smoking and made us warm once more. There were eighty in our battalion, and as many more of the Maine-and-

Loire men, and for the lot of us we hadn't above a dozen loaves of bread all told. So we munched our little scraps slowly, to make the most of them, and drank water from the pools that were everywhere—but oh how good a clove of garlic would have tasted then!

"While we waited for our order to march again, three young fellows on horseback came galloping down on us along with a pack of hounds. They were going out coursing, and pulled up to a walk as they passed us. 'Hello, draggle-tails, where do you come from?' one of them called out as they rode by. 'Vive la Révolution!' we shouted in answer. 'Chicken-stealing looks to be your business,' the fellow said, and he and one of his comrades struck spurs in their horses and were off with a laugh. But the third, a handsome lad, pulled up short and his eyes filled with tears. Off came his hat in a handsome bow to us, and 'Vive la Nation!' he cried in a voice that rang true. 'I'll join you, if you'll let me, comrades,' he cried; and with that we all gave him a rousing cheer. And he did join us. Our lieutenant enrolled him right there; and when we got on to Arras the municipality saw to his being armed and equipped. And he was only one of a good many who enlisted with us as we went onward—glad of the chance to go along and fight for holy Liberty. When we joined Dumouriez at last we were more than three thousand strong.

"I never shall forget our march up to the General's quarters—all of us storming out the 'Marseillaise' at the tops of our voices, and the men of the Army of the North shouting 'Vive

la République!' and cheering us as we came on! We marched past the General, and countermarched, and formed up while he made a speech to us.

"'Boys,' says the General, 'you've come at just the right time! To-morrow you shall taste Prussian plums. They are over in that village in front of us, the Prussians are, and the woods are full of them. I haven't counted 'em, but I'll not be far out if I say that there are forty-five thousand of 'em—and now that you've got here we're about eighteen thousand strong. And that's just about right—for one soldier of the Republic ought to be able to account for three of the hirelings of the Prussian King!' and then the General cried 'Vive la République!' and we cried 'Vive la République!' and everybody cheered.

"Well, I can tell you it just made us proud to be talked to that way, and joyful that our chance to fight for Liberty was to come so soon. We hugged each other all round, as if we hadn't met for years; and then we went to hugging the soldiers we didn't know at all as if they'd been our long lost brothers; and we shouted and yelled! The fine young fellow who'd left his hunting to join us was wilder than anybody, he was so glad. He was a good one, he was. He gave his horse to the General; and although he was a gentleman born and had a lot of yellow-boys in his pockets he munched black bread with us, and at night lay down with us on the hare's mattress, without ever saying a word! He took a great fancy to your Pascalet, and he seemed to like me too. 'Pierre Jacques,' he

told us to call him, and we did; but some of the other recruits said that that wasn't his name, and that he was the son of a ci-devant noble. But that didn't matter to us—for our 'Pierre Jacques' had no part nor lot with the nobles any more. The star of the Republic guided him, and the sun of Liberty lighted up his beautiful soul!"

CHAPTER XII

THE AFFAIR OF VALMY

"OUR General hadn't lied to us," Margan went on, "when he told us we were to taste Prussian plums that day. The Prussians were ready for us and we were ready for them, and while the dawn was breaking our drums beat the *pas de charge*—and at it we started, singing the 'Marseillaise.'

"I saw that there was hot work ahead of us, and before it began I turned to Pascalet and said: 'See here, Kiddy, we're going to the bumble-bee's high mass again—and this time we've got to handle not a few fellows in King Capet's castle but the whole army of the King of Prussia. He's as bad a tyrant as Capet was, and a better fighter. Do your best, my Pascalet—and remember that we've got to show these northern volunteers that the Reds of the Midi don't back down!' And that brave little fellow answered: 'If you see me doing any backing down, Margan, blow my brains out!' And then a devil of a cannonading began that put a stop to any more talk.

"We had been eating some bits of bread—but we had to stop biting bread and take to biting cartridges; and cartridges are not belly-filling, I can tell you. The cannon were bang-

ing away at us at a great rate. We could hear the balls whizzing over us, hissing like angry snakes, and we could see the branches of trees falling—but the gunners had not got our range. As far as we could see, off in front of us, the ground was just black with Prussians. Their base was a village that they were holding, and right into the thick of them we had to go and take that village. If we didn't, it would be the other way about—and then there would be no Army of the North to hold the frontier, and the King of Prussia would come marching into France, and on he would march to Paris and set up the tumbled-down throne again. And then —well, then it would be good-bye to Revolution and Republic and all!

"So we ragglety-bobtails stood to our work —though the gunners had got our range and the musket-ball bees were buzzing around us—and did what we could for France. Go back we wouldn't, and go ahead we couldn't, for our order to charge did not come. So we just bit our cartridges and fired and fired into the black heap of Prussians out there in front of us on the plain.

"And then, suddenly, through the whirlwinds of smoke and the whirlwinds of dust ploughed up by the balls, we saw General Dumouriez on horseback right in front of the battle; and we saw that our line was wavering, and that the General was trying to steady it and to lead a charge. But the line broke, in spite of him, and our red-plumed boys began to go the wrong way. And then what we had taken to be a line of pine woods, far off on the plain,

suddenly became a line of Prussian reserves—that came forward to the blare of trumpets, bringing the whole Prussian army along with it, on the heels of our flying boys. Well, it did look just then as though we'd lost everything—the battle and our honour, too!

"It was more than we fellows could stand. We didn't care what happened to us—if only we could save the day. So down went all our heads together, under the storm of balls and bullets, and like so many butting billy-goats we went into the fight at a double quick, our drums beating the *pas de charge*. Like a wedge our brigade jammed itself in between the runaways and the oncoming black battalions: and then General Dumouriez, who was crying with shame over it all, found that he had some men behind him whom he could lead! It was hot work that he led us to! From the Prussian line came a hurricane of bullets and cannon-balls and grape that levelled everything—trees, bushes, horses, men, all went down together, as though a great scythe had swept over the plain!

"But when the red-haired Prussians, the slaves of the Prussian King, saw us coming—charging on at them through everything, roaring out the 'Marseillaise'—they halted, formed up their lines, and met us with a still more deadly fire. But this fire only made us hurry forward so that we might come to grips with them. 'Never mind the Prussian plums,' I called out to Pascalet, who was just ahead of me. 'Have your pitchfork ready—this is our threshing-floor, and we're going to toss the straw!' Pascalet's face was one black grime of

powder and smoke. He never answered me a word, for at that moment we were in on the Prussian line. But he did what I told him to do. 'Tremblez, tyrans, et vous, perfides!' he yelled—and he tossed on his bayonet a Prussian gunner who must have weighed three times as much as he weighed himself!

"And then the straw began to fly, I can tell you! We were in a fury of killing, and we killed and killed! They tried to run from us—but the big heavy louts were no match for our nimbleness, and they stumbled over each other in their clumsy way. When they stood up to us we spitted them in the breast; when they were down we gave it to them in the back or the belly or the buttocks, just as it chanced—and on we went, leaving behind us a sheet of dead and wounded spread over the plain.

"And what we were doing brought the others up to the collar and made them pull their pound. Our own runaways, seeing Dumouriez dashing on at the head of us raggle-tails, were shamed out of their panic. General Kellermann, another good fellow, got them reformed; and at the head of them waved his sword and shouted out the 'Marseillaise'—and with heads down and fixed bayonets they charged the Prussians on a full run, like so many wolves!

"Well, amongst us all, we settled the matter. But we got so twisted up in doing it that our right wing was our left wing by the time we were through. That didn't make any difference, though. At the end of the battle, when the multitude of Prussians was scampering in

for armies to help them to invade their own land of France. What is more, these cowardly renegades had managed so well—being backed by the traitor Capet, who paid for the job with his head—that they had at their heels in Belgium such an army of Austrians as I don't believe ever before marched out under the cape of the sun! Forty thousand of them, there must have been; and forty thousand horses, and how many thousand cannon I really don't know! There were generals and commandants and captains of this host: that was made up, as I say, of forty thousand men, and forty thousand guns, and forty thousand bayonets, and forty thousand swords —every one of them brand new: sharpened, shining, glittering!

"Our army was of another sort. At Valmy, half of us had no bayonets to our muskets and half of us had no swords. Half of us went barefoot, and the rest of us had cracked sabots that wouldn't stick to our feet. And many a time our bellies were empty when we lay down to sleep in the mud or on the bare stones. But we didn't care! Though we went hungry, we had a flame that fed us: our faith in Liberty! Though our arms were poor and shabby, we had a weapon more terrible than red-hot cannon balls and glittering swords: our 'Marseillaise'!

"Well, over we went into Belgium, and through Belgium we went hunting for that terrible army of Austrians. But we couldn't find it! Our generals, to hearten us up, kept saying: 'We'll meet them to-morrow'—only it kept on being 'to-morrow,' until we got sick and tired

of marching to that fight that never came off! To tell the truth, we almost lost heart over it. Some of our fellows said: 'There can't be any army for us to fight. An army isn't a pin—you can't lose it in the grass!' But others took a blacker view of the matter, and said gloomily: 'We are betrayed!'

"Our Pascalet was among the few who never lost heart nor courage. He kept up the spirits of the doubters, and when any man talked about our being betrayed he would give that man a shaking that brought him back to reason; and then he would burst out with

'Allons, enfants de la Patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!'

And all together we would take up the glorious song, and our hearts would swell again with hope.

"One morning we were grunting worse than ever. For three days we had been marching through a forest. As we fell in, at dawn, cold and hungry, to keep on with our march you could hear from one end of our line to the other only growls. It seemed as though we never were going to get out from among those endless trees! But when we had formed for the march General Dumouriez forced our column and called out to us as he waved his sword: 'Citizen soldiers of the Republic! The sun shall not set before you have seen the army of the Austrian tyrant! Vive la Nation!'

"Those words, you may be sure, put fresh life into us. All together, in a great roar, we shouted: 'Vive Dumouriez! Vive la Nation!'

—and swung forward, still cheering, eager to lessen the distance between us and the enemy. And presently, just as the sun rose, we came out into the open—and that miserable forest at last was left behind!

"But what we saw before us dashed our hopes again. Below, out in front of us, stretching away to the horizon, was what seemed to be the ocean—with little waves upon its surface which caught the sunlight and sent bright flashes into our eyes. 'The sea!' we cried. 'We are at the end of the earth! We have missed the Austrians! Back we must go through the forest for another three chill nights and days!' Utter discouragement settled down upon us. Even Pascalet had not the heart to strike up the 'Marseillaise.' Only our comrade Jacques Pierre—who was a northern man, you know—didn't seem disheartened a bit; and as he listened to our growls and groans he only grinned. And Jacques Pierre was right to grin that way, for we were a pack of fools!

"As the sun rose higher above the hills, and the heat of his rays grew stronger, all of a sudden a new picture was before our wondering eyes. Like a cloud of smoke melting away and vanishing, what had seemed like the glittering waves of the ocean were dissolved in the sunshine—and before us was a great marshy plain across which the Austrians, horse and foot and artillery, were marching toward the hills near Jemappes where they were to make their stand. And then, in a flash, we understood the mistake that we had made. The layer of thick mist, rising just a little higher than the head of a man

on horseback, had hidden everything but the glistening bayonet-tips and the glistening crests of the cavalrymen's helmets—and these, swaying regularly with the regular motion of the march, had seemed to us numskulls the sparkling wavelets of the sea!"

CHAPTER XIII

THE BATTLE OF JEMAPPES

"WELL," Margan went on, "if ever there was a lot of delighted men it was us just then. We were not permitted to make a noise—for we were under cover of the wood and the enemy had not seen us—and so we could not take to yelling the 'Marseillaise,' as we wanted to. But we stuck our red caps on our bayonets and waved them about, and danced silent rigadoons together—until, presently, the order came for us to march back into the wood again, to some marble quarries, that we might lie hidden there.

"Back we went to the great marble quarries, and there we lay snugly out of sight—like so many wolves in a den. Then we had our breakfast of bread, and precious dry and hard it was! The men all growled over it and said we might as well be eating stones. Pascalet managed it better than the rest of us, for he has jaws and teeth fit to crack steel. 'What are you growling about?' he asked. 'To-morrow we'll have bayonets for breakfast, and they'll be harder still!' And the notion of having bayonets for breakfast set us all to laughing, and to longing for the next day to come.

"To fill in the time, for it was dull work waiting idly, we cleaned up our muskets and

pistols and sharpened our swords; and we watched General Dumouriez and General Kellermann and the two deputies from the Convention sitting together with a map spread out in front of them, planning how the battle was to be fought. It was comfortable down there in the deep quarries, dry and warm—the best camp we'd made on the whole march. And yet when night came—though we were used to sleeping anyhow and anywhere—we couldn't sleep at all! Every minute somebody would be asking: 'Isn't it almost daylight? Isn't it time to start?'

"Well, from the time that we turned back into the wood until we started out again we had twenty hours of waiting. I tell you it did us good when at last we got the order to fall in! We laughed and joked over what was coming, and some of us took to dancing a farandole! Pascalet, coming from the farandole country, ought to have been in that; but he wasn't, and when I hunted around for him I found him standing on one side looking as glum as you please. 'What's the matter?' says I. 'Oh, nothing,' says he. 'Yes there is,' says I. 'What is it?' 'It's nothing, I tell you,' says he—and then we fell in, and the column began to move. It was the dusk of very early morning. Our drums were silent. As quietly as possible we marched toward the position to which we had been assigned.

"To make Pascalet tell me what was the matter with him, I pretended to be angry with him and made a show of joining the next rank. We always had marched side by side, like

brothers, and he couldn't stand that. As I stepped away from him he put his hand on my shoulder and said: 'Stay with me, Margan.'

"'Then speak up,' said I. 'I don't know you, Pascalet, when you're like this.'

"I took my place beside him again, and as we marched on together he said to me in a voice so low that only I could hear him: 'Margan, I'm not afraid of death. I'd give my life twenty times over, if I could, for the Republic and for Liberty.'

"'Well, nobody doubts that,' said I. 'But what's the matter with you? Has anybody said anything to hurt you?'

"'No, no. It's nothing of that kind,' he answered. He was quiet for a minute, and then he went on: 'See here, Margan, it's an easy thing for a sword to split your head open, or a musket bullet to make a hole through you, or a cannon ball to knock you to bits. I've been thinking that something like that may be going to happen to me—that in the next couple of hours or so I may be killed.'

"'Well,' said I, 'you won't be the only one. And, anyway, what's to be done about it? When a man's dead, he's dead—and that's all there is about it. It's a kind of sickness there's no cure for.'

"'I'm not laughing,' said he. 'If I die, if my life goes out for our just Revolution, I want you to do something for me, Margan. Will you?'

"'Speak up,' said I. 'I'll do anything you want me to do—always supposing I don't sneeze out my little butterfly of a soul ahead of yours.'

"'Please don't make fun,' said the poor boy, with a long sigh. 'I'm in earnest, Margan. I'm very much in earnest. I want you to promise me that if I die, and you get home all right, you'll go and see my mother.'

"'Why, of course I will,' said I. And then I gave him a slap on the shoulder and said: 'Cheer up, youngster! Something tells me you're not going to die to-day.'

"'But that's—that's not all I want you to do for me, Margan,' he went on in a queer sort of way.

"'Well, out with the rest of it,' said I. 'I'll do whatever you want.'

"'When I'm—when I'm dead,' said he, 'here in this pocket over my heart you'll find a bright medal of Notre Dame de bon secours. I want you to take it, and to take great care of it; and when you go home I want you to give it to one whom I love, to one who perhaps loves me—whose face always is before my eyes as clear as when I saw her, the bird-song of whose sweet voice always is ringing in my ears as plain as when I heard her!'

"'But who is she?' I asked.

"'Oh,' said he, 'you can't possibly mistake her. She's the very best and the most beautiful girl in all the world! She's the flower of the world! She's an angel from Paradise. She's as dazzling as Liberty! And you'll say to her, please: "Poor Pascalet, when he died for his country, was thinking of you. He was thinking of you when he shed his last drop of blood. He told me to bring to you, that you might keep it in memory of him, this medal of

Notre Dame de bon secours—the only thing that he owned in all the world!"'

"'Now see here, Pascalet,' said I, 'do you think I'm a wizard? She's the most beautiful and the best, and a flower and an angel, and as dazzling as Liberty! That's all very well. But that's the way they all are—all the girls who make us fall head over heels in love with 'em. If you want me to do this for you, you've got to tell me your girl's name.'

"All the time that we were talking we were going forward at a good pace, and by that time we were down on the great mist-covered plain, that we had taken for the sea the day before, and were marching through the mist ourselves.

"Pascalet did not answer me, and to make him give me something that I could go by I said to him, short and sharp: 'I don't believe you know her name yourself!'

"He turned red and said: 'Vauclair will tell you who it is.'

"'But where am I to find Vauclair?' I asked. 'Don't you suppose that Vauclair's off on the frontier too—fighting the foreigners along with all the other good Reds of the Midi?'

"'If you can't find Vauclair,' he said, 'Vauclair's wife, Lazuli, will tell you. She rescued us both from misfortune and took us home to live with her. And she guessed our child-love—when she saw us playing with the fire that's burning in me now, and that will burn in me always while I live.'

"Then I gave him a cut that I was sure would bring the truth out of him. 'Oh,' said I, 'I see how it is—you're ashamed to tell me her

name. It's some good-for-nothing baggage in Paris——'

"'Hush! Hush! Margan!' he exclaimed. 'You must not talk that way. I will tell you her name. It is Adeline, and she is the daughter of the Marquis d'Ambrun.' And as he got it out at last he took a step ahead of me so that I could not see his burning cheeks.

"At that very moment the sun came up above the hills—and as though the sun had set the world on fire there burst upon us a hellish cannonade! All the batteries began an awful fire upon us: belching out round-shot and grape and flashings and thunderings without a single stop, until we were in the very thick of a rain of lead and iron! As we stood there in the centre of the plain, with the cannon blazing away at us, it seemed as if every stone and tree and bush, even the very tufts of grass, on all the mountains and hills round about us were loaded with powder and shot and all were going off together to sweep us away from the face of the earth!

"Tangled up as we were in the fog, it was more than we could stand. Our battalions shivered, wavered, broke! An awful confusion was upon us. Through the fog we ran without knowing where we were running. We trampled over our own wounded—whose shrieks and howls made things a thousand times worse. Our two squadrons of cavalry, in the van, lost their heads and came crashing back right through our ranks. We didn't know where to turn nor what to do. We couldn't see our generals. We heard no orders. The rain of lead and iron fell

faster and faster. It looked as if it was going to be the very ruin of ruin—as if our army of the Republic was to be wiped out for good and all! And Pascalet was gone from beside me. I called to him—'Pascalet! Pascalet!' There was no answer—and all around me the ground was covered with dead and dying men!"

Margan stopped in his story suddenly and exclaimed: "Why, what's the matter with the boy?" As he spoke, Adeline gave a gasping cry and fell over sidewise in a dead faint on Monsieur Randoulet's knees.

"Water! Quick, water!" cried Monsieur Randoulet, as he raised her tenderly in his arms.

"Here's something that will do more good than water," said Margan—and drew a flask from his pocket and held it to Adeline's lips. The strong stuff revived her in a moment. Her eyes opened, the colour returned to her face, and she sat erect again. Then her memory partly came back, and she asked brokenly: "But—but he was not killed, the brave Pascalet?"

"Not a bit of it!" Margan answered. "And, what is more, it was he who got us out of our scrape."

Being assured by Adeline's quick revival that her fainting was not a serious matter, the members of the little party settled down again—their mouths as wide open as horse-collars—to listen to the rest of the story of the battle; and Margan, having put his flask back into his pocket, went on:

"I thought, just as the boy here thought, that our Pascalet had swallowed a bullet the

wrong way—for I couldn't see him anywhere. And things were in a devil of a mess generally. Our line was wavering; and our officers, instead of steadying us, were giving us orders at cross purposes—our captain ordering us to lie down, and our major waving his sword and ordering us to charge. With the mist blinding us, and with death all around us, it was more than any soldiers could stand. In another minute or two we should have broken our ranks and run for it—and if we had done that I don't believe a man of us would have pulled through alive. And then, suddenly, our courage, our patriotism, every bit of go that was in us, came to the top as we heard—heard it above the infernal roar of the firing—a voice that we knew storming out:

'Allons, enfants de la Patrie
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!
Contre nous de la tyrannie
L'étendard sanglant est levé!'

"Just as though our Hymn of the Revolution had magic in it, as those words rang out the mist rose from about us and we could see what we were doing and where we were. And there, right in front of us, singing the glorious 'Marseillaise,' we saw our Pascalet—his bayonet at a charge, his head down like an angry bull, going off at a run to capture all the Prussians with his own two hands! That settled things for us. Off we went after him—by tens, by hundreds, by thousands. In an instant our whole division, thundering out the 'Marseillaise,' was streaming along toward the nearest hill that

was spitting out at us fire and iron and death! Bent close to the ground, we rushed onward—the balls whistling over us as the wind whistles over a field of ripe wheat when the ears are heavy and hang low. Our whole army caught our song and our spirit and came on with us. Like a league-long wave, our line of battle surged across the plain and up the hillside with a great roar of

'Qu'un sang impur abreuve nos sillons!'

"Up the hillside, a resistless tide, this roaring wave mounted higher and higher—dashing up the steep slopes, plunging over the walls, crushing flat the bushes—until it came full and strong against the fiery barriers that were thundering forth iron death. Over those barriers we poured—standing upright, at last, after our charge of near half a league—and down on the other side of them we rushed like wolves into the enemy's close-pressed ranks. And then such a killing began as never was seen! They were packed together, the Prussians, like bees in a swarm. We were against them and among them, in such a jumble that you could not tell whether we were killing them or hugging them. It was so thick that when you had spitted a man with your bayonet you scarcely could get it out of him again—until we unshipped our bayonets and took to stabbing with them at short arm. That answered. Down went the Prussians all around us in heaps of dead flesh. Presently they all were dead or running—and the battery was ours!

"It was that way along the whole line.

Everywhere the Prussians gave way before us—for who could withstand the soldiers of the Republic?—and in less than two hours we had carried all the fortified hills and were holding the centre of the Prussian position, the village of Jemappes. And that meant that at a single gulp—in just about as long as it takes to yoke the oxen and plough a long furrow—we'd conquered Belgium!"

CHAPTER XIV

HOW FRENCHMEN FOUGHT FOR FRANCE

MARGAN paused for a moment, while a buzz of talk went up from the little company. Then he went on again:

"Tè! I clean forgot to tell you that, in the thick of it all, a beast of a garde-de-corps wiped out my eye with a pistol shot. Things like that happen in a battle, you know. It was lucky that he did not wipe off the top of my head!

"As for Pascalet, I kept track of him pretty well while the fighting was going on, and I saw that he came through it all right. Every now and then I heard him shouting out a bit of the 'Marseillaise'—by way of keeping the battalion up to its work, I suppose—and then I'd say to myself: 'Aha, the little cock still is cock-a-doodling. No need to worry about him yet!' And while I had both my eyes on duty I'd take a look at him, when the chance came, and every time I saw that he was doing his work with a will—going at it in as tearing a hurry as a goat among the grape-vines in May-time!

"After the battle we came together on the little Place of Jemappes. There he saw that my eye was gone—and, Lord, but he was in a taking! He made me come with him to the fountain, and there he washed my hurt and then

bound it up with a poultice of some sweet-smelling plant that he found on the hillside—something that he knew about that would do me good, he said; and it did. Why, a doctor couldn't have done a better job!"

"Poor, poor Margan!" exclaimed La Patine.

"How dreadfully it must have hurt you!" said Adeline.

"Oh, well," Margan answered, "I did have a headache in the night. But we had to go to fighting again the next day, and I didn't have time to feel it or to think about it. You see, the whole country was full of broken divisions of Prussians and Austrians, and we had to hunt them out and thrash the whole of them—and to take all the forts and all the towns where they tried to make a stand. And we did it with a whizz! On we went from victory to victory—until all the forces of the enemy were conquered or scattered, all their generals dead or prisoners, and we had the whole country flying the Republican red, white and blue.

"But for all our victories," Margan went on, speaking slowly and gravely, "we came near to being ruined by a black misfortune. Just because of our victories, I suppose, Dumouriez had his head turned—to say no worse of him—and thought that he could do what he pleased. That man, whom we had carried on the palms of our hands, whom we would have followed to the end of the earth against our country's enemies, fancied that he could use us for his own purposes—that he could conquer Holland with us, and then march us to Paris and sweep out the Convention and make himself

I don't know what: King or Emperor, perhaps; or perhaps the power that would put back the Tyrant on his throne. Madness it all was, and worse than madness—it was a crime!

"Well, as long as he led us against our honest enemies he had no trouble with us. Into Holland we followed him, shouting 'Vive la République!' and all of us as pleased as we could be. But one dismal day he plumped us down into the middle of a Dutch swamp; and there he kept us, with never a shot fired at anybody for days and weeks—and what was the meaning of it we did not know! 'I don't understand it,' says I to Pascalet. 'Here everybody's grumbling—and everybody has a right to grumble, for Dumouriez isn't Dumouriez any more!'

"'A Republican can't be a traitor!' says Pascalet back to me, short and sharp. 'It's all right, Margan.' But that wasn't the way that I felt about it, and it wasn't the way that most of us felt about it—and, as the end showed, we were right and Pascalet was wrong.

"Well, one day, four Deputies from the Convention came riding into our camp—we were camped in a village called Bois Saint-Amand—to make Dumouriez talk things out with them; for, it seems, the folks in Paris had got wind of what he meant to do. It was about nightfall when they came into camp, and Dumouriez had them brought straight to his tent—where he was ready for them, with a lot of officers who were of his mind. The next thing those four Deputies knew, they were prisoners; and the next thing after that, they were handed over, as

prisoners, to the Austrian General—as Dumouriez and the Austrian had arranged between them in advance! Think of it! Think of the shame of it! After Valmy, after Jemappes, the soldiers of the Republic to be betrayed! But, God be praised! it isn't easy to chew nettles; and, even when you have chewed 'em, they swallow hard! Dumouriez found out the truth of that saying before he was a much older man!

"As soon as the four Deputies had been sent across our lines to the enemy, the order was given that we were to break camp and march at once. It was cloudy, and as dark as pitch, but we knew our business and presently we were in marching order and in line. Dumouriez and his staff passed up our line, to head the march, and some of our men swore there were Austrians with him. But that could have been no more than guess-work—for though they passed within twenty paces of us I could see only a black huddle of men and horses showing faintly against the black sky. But about what the General said when he got to the head of the column there was no guess-work. In the stillness of that black night we heard every one of his black words. 'Soldiers of France,' he cried. 'Follow your General who always has led you to victory! He leads you now to deliver your country! Long live France! Down with the Convention!'

"Thunders of hell! When I heard that traitor shouting out his treason I couldn't hold myself in! 'Vive la République!' I shouted—and all the army shouted it after me in a mighty roar that fairly shook the black clouds.

"In the lull of silence following that great shout, our brave Jacques Pierre called out in a tone of bitter contempt that cut through the darkness like a knife: 'A fig for Dumouriez!' Again the army took up the cry, and 'A fig for Dumouriez!' went rolling down our line.

"Dumouriez was in a frenzy. Stammering with rage, he shouted: 'If the man who said that is not afraid of death, let him tell his name!'

"For a moment there was a silence so deep that our breathing seemed to jar on it. Then, in a full strong voice, our comrade answered: 'It was I who said "A fig for Dumouriez!" I, Jacques Pierre Cambronne, a volunteer of the Republic in the Maine-et-Loire Battalion!'—and as he spoke he brought his piece to his shoulder and fired at the traitor General in the dark!

"In an instant there was a crackle of musketry. I was firing at Dumouriez, so was Pascalet, so were a score more! But there was no taking aim in that pocket of darkness, and as the plum was not ripe that was to finish him he got safe away. We heard a rush of galloping horses, then the sound of hoof-beats growing fainter and fainter, then only the buzz of our own angry talk. That was the last of him. We never again laid eyes on that traitor who had tried to lead us out of the bright road of glory into treason's foul and crooked path!

"The whole of that dismal night we spent in cursing Dumouriez and in bemoaning our shame; and then, for breakfast, we fought the Austrians—who thought that they could make mincemeat of us because we had lost our General; and who did not give up that notion until we

pretty well had made mince-meat of them! We showed them that soldiers of the Republic, with a general or without one, cannot be conquered: because their fight is made against tyrants for holy Liberty and for the brotherhood of men!

"If it had not been for our strong faith in the cause we were fighting for we never could have got ourselves out of the hole in which Dumouriez left us. There we were in front of the Austrian and Prussian armies—who had new recruits coming up all the while to take the place of the men we killed for them, and who had a plenty of ammunition, and who were never short of food. As for us, we were in want of everything. For days together there would not be enough bread to go round among us. Some of us were hungry all the time. Worse than that. we were short of ammunition—not many powder-sausages for our cannon, and no balls at all. Why, we fought ever so many battles just with our muskets and bayonets and with never a cannon shot fired! That we were hungry did not make much difference; but it played the very devil with us to have our poor cannon fairly crying for food!

"By the same token, it was along of the hunger of our cannon that I got rid of my arm. It happened this way: We were under the walls of Valenciennes—we'd got out of Holland by that time—and the Austrians had batteries everywhere. From all of them they blazed away at us at their ease, and not a gun could we serve back at them. All that we had to answer with was little lead peas from our muskets—and for all the good they did they might as well have

been real peas, and boiled ones at that! Our men were pretty nearly desperate. Some of them tore their hair, some wept in their rage, some shook their fists in the face of Heaven! But what good did that do? On came the storm of Austrian balls!

"Then it was that Pascalet had a wild devil of an idea. 'Friends,' he cried, 'we've got faith in what we're fighting for, and we've got courage and strength for our fight. But we haven't cannon balls, and we've got to have 'em —and I'm going to show you how they can be had. Mark my words, in an hour or two the Austrians will be running away!'

"We all thought, of course, that he had gone clean crazy. But he hadn't. Standing his musket, bayonet down, in the earth, away he ran to a sandy slope into which the Austrian cannon-balls were dropping like hail. And what did that little rascal do but grub three balls out of the sand and come running back with 'em to our dumfounded cannoneers! 'Here,' says he —'here's something to feed your cannon with. Feed 'em, and crack away!'

"'Vive Pascalet! Vive Pascalet!' we all roared together, while the gunners rammed down the Austrian balls into their guns and then sent them flying back into the Austrian lines!

"Well, you may be sure that when Pascalet had shown us how to play that game he was not left to play it alone. Off we went to the sand hill, with a skip and a jump—each of us in a hurry to dig our potatoes to feed our guns! It was lively work, I can tell you! As we would be grubbing up one ball, down would plump

another close beside it, half blinding us with the dust that it sent flying. But we didn't mind a little thing like that! 'Vive la République!' we shouted—and on we went with our game! I tell you, I fairly cried like a baby as I saw how all of a sudden our men had got back their fighting spirit—and were just dancing with eagerness to follow in the wake of the cannon-balls and rush the Austrian line!

"My one eye got so full of tears that I couldn't see to do my digging. I tried to put up my hand to wipe my tears away, and—I hadn't any hand! It wasn't there any longer—and my arm was gone too! 'This is as strong as pepper!' says I, but what I was saying I scarcely knew. Then, in a dim sort of way, I saw Pascalet, his face all over dust and streaked with sweat, standing beside me; and from ever so far off, as it seemed, I heard him say: 'Margan—your arm!'

"Then things got clearer. 'Holy Saint Perlipopette!' says I. 'It's gone! A cannon ball must have sliced it off!'

"And that was just what had happened! One of those cursed Austrian balls had cut it off close to the shoulder—and so quickly that I didn't feel it go! I did feel something, to be sure—a sharp rap, as it seemed to me, as if one of my comrades had hit against me by accident, but that was all.

"Well, I don't mind telling you that I was a sort of flabbergasted. It takes a man's breath away, a little, to lose his arm like that—without knowing anything about it! But it gave me something fresh to think about, and put a stop

to my tears. 'Well,' says I to Pascalet, 'here's a pretty go!'

"Pascalet was more cut up about it, I think, than I was. But he wanted to make things pleasant for me, and so he said: 'Well, it's only an arm, Margan. It's lucky it wasn't your head!' And he talked away to comfort me—while the balls came bouncing down all around us—and set to work to plug me up, so as to stop the blood that was pouring out of me in a stream. The best that he could do was to pack dry sand from the hillside on my stump, and that did stop the bleeding. At least, I think it did. Just as he was finishing, and I was trying to say 'Thank you,' all of a sudden I seemed to tumble down into darkness—and then I didn't know anything at all!

"An hour, two hours, I don't know how long after that, I felt something cool on my face and found that my wits were coming back to me. I opened my eye, and the first thing I saw with it was that kind little mug of Pascalet's. The Austrians had cleared out, the battle was over, and that good little youngster had come back to find if anything was left of me—and Cambronne, another good fellow, had come with him to lend a hand.

"'Margan! Margan!' he cried. 'It's all right. We've whipped the Austrians!'

"'Vive la République!' I said back to him, and tried to put out my right arm and get up. It was queer to find that I hadn't any! Pascalet and Cambronne had to help me up between them, and when I was on my legs I saw that I still had something to be thankful for. 'I'm

blind of one eye,' says I, 'and one arm 's gone. But I've got my two legs left to stand and fight on! Vive la République!' You see I thought that with a good pair of legs, and a good eye, and a good arm, I still might go on fighting for holy Liberty. But, pecaire! they wouldn't have me any longer in the ranks! I begged and prayed to stay, and Pascalet begged and prayed for me—saying that my left arm was worth more than any ten right arms he'd ever seen. But it wasn't any good. I had to clear out. My fighting for Liberty was at an end!

"Pascalet and Cambronne bore me company, sadly, to the cart full of wounded men in which I was sent to Paris. We hugged all around—though my hug was a poor one—and we parted with full hearts." Margan paused, and then choked a little as he added: "It will be a long hunt that anybody will have before finding any two comrades as true to each other and as close to each other as Pascalet and me!"

Margan was silent for near a minute. Then, in a light tone that was a little forced, he went on: "Well, all that is over and done with. They got my stump in good order in Paris, and then on I came to Avignon. The first thing I did in Avignon was to go to Vauclair's house in the Place du Grand Paradis. A pretty state of things I found there! The house was empty, and sacked, and half in ruin. There was no Vauclair, no Lazuli, no sign of the girl that Pascalet thinks such a heap of and sent the message to. I was brought up with a round turn and didn't know what to do with myself—until the notion came into my head that I'd walk on out here

and give you news of your boy. Like enough he'll be coming back to you himself before long. The war up there is ended by this time. Our soldiers of the Republic saw the heels of the last Austrian, and I have heard that our army is on its way back to Paris. There's a good chance that Pascalet will be with you for the chestnutting at Martinmas—or for the Calends of Christmas, anyway."

"Truly, do you think he will come back to us?" asked La Patine, in a quavering voice that told how deep was her feeling.

"I'm as sure of his coming back to you as I'm sure of the five fingers on my left hand!" Margan answered heartily.

"And oh," cried Adeline, "if he comes at Christmas time we'll all lay the yule log together on Christmas Eve!"

"It will be a fine day," sighed old Pascal, "that brings home again my boy—who got into trouble and had to go away all along o' me!" The simple old man fell to crying as he spoke; and, as his strong emotion sent his blood to his head, the scars left by the Vicomte's whip-lash on his poor old face stood out with a ghastly distinctness. Adeline's heart went chill as she saw those cruel scars, and knew that the whip which had made them had been in her own brother's hand!

"Well, well," said Margan kindly, "that fine day is coming, and is coming soon. It won't be long before you have your Pascalet back again from the wars, safe and sound.

"And now, friends," he went on, "I must be marching. I've got the Grande Combe to cross

before nightfall, and must be off. So good-bye to you all."

"But you must not leave us without breaking bread with us," said Monsieur Randoulet; "and you must have, too, another sup of wine before you go."

"As to the drink," Margan answered, "you may be sure I'm not for refusing it; but the bread, by your leave, I'll put in my pocket and make my supper on it as I go along."

Adeline opened the wallet and brought out for him a good chunk of sweet bread, and as many almonds as his pocket would hold—giving him gladly all her own share, for it seemed to her that in a way she was giving food to Pascalet himself. Monsieur Randoulet handed him the bottle, and with a nod to the company he kissed it long and lovingly—standing straight as a cock, with his nose in the air and his eyes fixed on the blue sky. "That was to our good luck, and to our meeting soon again," he said as he put down the bottle. "And now I'm off."

They all embraced him and kissed him on the cheek—La Patine and Adeline weeping like Magdalens, because it seemed to them that they were kissing Pascalet—and then Monsieur Randoulet walked with him a little way to set him on his road.

"You go down by this path," said Monsieur Randoulet, "into the valley of the Nesque, and you follow the dry bed of the river through the gorge below the Crows' Chapel."

"The Crows' Chapel, Monsieur. What is that?"

"It is a cave, high up the mountain side.

Our country people have given it that name. There, at the mouth of the gorge, you turn to the left—passing an old tower on a little hill at the foot of the mountain and leaving on your right, high up among the rocks, the village of Venasque. You will know it by the pointed belfry of its church tower, to which you will see—if your eyes are sharp—wolves' heads nailed fast. There, at the entrance to the Grande Combe, the valley will open out wide before you ; and you will go on through La Grande Combe to Sénanque. About midway you will come to the Dripping Rock. Since the world began that rock never has ceased to drip; and the drops of water, ever falling, have hollowed out from the hard stone a little basin to which all the birds of the mountains come to slake their thirst. But hurry past it, do not let night catch you there."

"Yes, yes," Margan answered, "I understand. There are wolves."

"No, I do not warn you against the wolves. Worse than wolves are there—the Whites!"

"Oh, if it's only the Whites I don't mind. Let 'em come!" and with these words Margan was off at a good pace down the steep path.

CHAPTER XV

THE FLIGHT FROM THE GENDARMES

MONSIEUR RANDOULET came back to the others. For a while they were silent as they turned over in their minds all that Margan had told. The Curé was the first to speak. "Well," he said, "we didn't bring our wallet of food along just to look at. We brought it to eat—and we'd better eat it now."

At his word Adeline brought out what was left of the loaf and divided it into four portions, of which she kept the smallest for herself. She had no desire to eat. An exquisite emotion filled her—a joy that she scarcely could control. But there was a touch of bitterness in it because she was forced to keep it to herself; because she could not ask for sympathy in the glad thoughts of Pascalet which filled her heart. And also, because of the intensity of her happiness, a shadow of dread hung over her: as though joy so great must be paid for promptly with pain.

As they finished their little repast the sun was edging down toward the plain. Monsieur Randoulet put the empty bottle back into the wallet, and then rose from his stone seat. Fillipping the dust from his breeches with his fingers, he said: "Come, child, now we must go home to Janetoun."

As he spoke, they all heard, from far off among the olive-trees, a sound as of some one calling. La Patine, who had gone back to the threshing of her little harvest, stopped pounding the wheat ears with her sabot and listened intently. "I think some one is calling you, Monsieur le Curé," she said.

Presently the calling came again, nearer and louder. They all heard the words: "Monsieur Randoulet!"

"That's Janetoun," said the Curé; and he stood on tip-toe, the better to see down the path.

"Yes, it is," said La Patine. "I can see her now. She's got a bundle. Goodness, what a hurry she's in!"

"Ah," sighed Adeline, "she's bringing us bad news!"

"Most likely some dying man has sent for me," said Monsieur Randoulet. He walked quickly down the path; and the old woman, seeing him, came stumbling still faster to meet him. "Softly! softly, Janetoun!" he called out to her. "Don't run like that. And with a bundle, too! You'll make yourself ill."

Janetoun did not try to answer. She kept what little breath she had left in her until she was come close to him; and then she panted out: "The gendarmes! They're here! They've come for Adeline, and for you too!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Monsieur Randoulet. "Who told you?"

"No one told me," Janetoun gasped out. "I saw them. I saw them coming along the Carpentras road. They are at the inn. Melio,

the innkeeper's wife, came to warn me that they've come for you and Adeline. Hurry! Hurry! You've barely time to get away!"

Monsieur Randoulet, speechless, raised his clasped hands for an instant in supplication to heaven. Then, with Janetoun panting behind him, he hurried back along the path. As he neared the little group of anxious watchers he called to Adeline: "The gendarmes are searching for us, my child. My good Janetoun has brought us warning. We must get away from here, and into hiding, at once."

"It is Calisto who is seeking me again," cried Adeline. "I am sure of it!"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Janetoun, "that is the name. That's the very name, Calisto, that Melio said! He's got twelve gendarmes with him, and an old man with a red cap. And they've come to arrest Monsieur Randoulet and you!"

Adeline turned very white as Janetoun spoke, but she did not lose either her courage or her strength. Taking Monsieur Randoulet's hand in hers, and kissing it, she said: "Monsieur Randoulet, kind and good friend, you must not and you shall not suffer for my sake. I shall go alone into the mountains. Perhaps the wolves there will settle all for me!"

"Hush, my child," the Curé answered. "I know my duty, and I shall do it. Those who make a prisoner of you must also make a prisoner of me." And then, turning to Janetoun, he added: "Tell me, do those who are searching for her know that Adeline is here, at the hut of La Garde?"

"No—but they are looking for her everywhere and are questioning everybody. They are certain to learn that you passed along the Pramàri Road. They are very likely to learn that you came on up here."

"Yes. But who can tell them that it is Adeline who is with me? Everybody believes that she is a boy."

"Not now. Not any longer. This Calisto knows all about her being in boy's clothes. He told the innkeeper's wife that it was a girl in boy's clothes they were looking for. And he said that she was Mademoiselle la Comtessine d'Ambrun."

Old Pascal and his wife, listening to this talk, stared in wonder. And when Janetoun plumped out that the pretty boy they had grown to be so fond of was their own Comtessine, down they both went to her on their knees.

But there was no time to talk with them about this wonder. Monsieur Randoulet knew that Janetoun was right, and that for himself and Adeline the only chance for safety was in instant flight.

"Get up," he said to the kneeling peasants. "Get up and give us charity. We are God's poor—a priest and a Comtessine who ask alms of you to help them to save their lives. If you have a loaf, give it to us: for we must get away, this instant, into the mountains; and if we are happy enough to escape death at the hands of the Whites and at the fangs of the wolves, we must not die for want of food."

La Patine was on her feet and off into the hut before he had ceased speaking. In a mo-

[illegible] had pulled down the last of her black [illegible] where it was hung to a rafter, that [illegible] might not reach it—and had come back [illegible] hands. "Here is all that we have, [illegible] she said, "and I give it to [illegible] my whole heart."

"[illegible] himself will return it to you," Monsieur Randoulet answered, and turned away [illegible] that she might not see his tears.

Adeline flung herself into La Patine's arms [illegible] pressed close against her heart. But it was [illegible] of an instant that their embrace lasted. [illegible] the mountain side, far below the olive-[illegible], Monsieur Randoulet had caught a flashing [illegible] of armed horsemen on the Pramàri [illegible]. He seized Adeline's hand and drew her [illegible] toward the narrow path which led [illegible] the fastnesses of the mountains. There was not a moment to lose!

[illegible] Janetoun, still panting, walked with [illegible] a few steps as she said farewell. She [illegible] the bundle that she had brought into Adeline's hands, saying, "This is your frock, Mademoiselle;" and she believed that still in [illegible] were Adeline's three silver crowns. [illegible] honest old soul gave to Monsieur Ran-[illegible] knotted fast in a handkerchief, the little [illegible] which Lazuli and Jean Caritous had left with her. The thought of what would happen to herself, thus left moneyless, never crossed her mind. Then she turned back sadly toward the hut, and by the time that she was come to [illegible] fugitives had disappeared among the thick-[illegible] bushes and trees. Strong gusts of [illegible] were beginning to blow through the for-

est, and the low-hanging sun was sinking into a mass of black clouds touched here and there by an angry red. After that long hot day a storm was rising. Far away, down the wind, was the growl of thunder. Old Pascal welcomed the storm. "It will give them a chance," he said. "Monsieur le Curé, who knows every foot of the country side, can find his way in the dark. These strangers cannot follow him. Yes, it will give them a chance!"

Old Pascal was right. Calisto and the gendarmes, when they reached the hut and found that those for whom they searched had vanished, wasted no time in words. In a moment they had scattered and were beating through the bushes and trees—hurriedly and eagerly, because of the thickening darkness and the rising storm. Had they known it, only a few steps away from them, down in the valley of the Nesque, Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline were crouching close against a rock—fearful to move lest they should be seen. Visibly the anger of God showed itself in the black cloud, swollen with rain and hail, that rose above Mont Ventour. From the mountains sounded faintly the dismayed barking of foxes and the deeper howls of wolves. But Calisto, a fiercer beast than any wolf, was not put back from his cruel work by the storm and the darkness. From a little height he directed the searchers, shouting to them to do their work well. The searched-for ones could see him, his figure outlined black against the sky, and could hear his words: "Zòu! Zòu! Zòu! Stick your swords into all the bushes—and draw them out red!" It

seemed to those hunted ones that he certainly must see them also. They crouched closer; and still closer as they heard the tread of horses coming directly toward them down the ravine. God himself seemed to have loosed the furies of hell upon them. They were desperate. With clasped hands they knelt together. All hope left them. Together they murmured: "Our Father who art in Heaven, Thy will be done!"

They prayed, and it seemed as though a wrathful God heard and disdained their prayer! At that instant the whole mountain side was aglare with a tremendous flash of lightning—so vivid that for an instant the black ravine of the Nesque was as light as day. Calisto and his men saw them, and with a shout came rushing toward them—while the thunder crashed in a deafening peal!

But that dazzling flash, which seemed to bring their ruin, brought their salvation. In the darkness that succeeded it—for black night by this time was upon them—their pursuers for a moment were at fault. Monsieur Randoulet saw his opportunity and seized it. In spite of his age and his feebleness, he raised Adeline—half dead with fear—in his arms, and bore her away rapidly down the ravine. He knew the ground thoroughly. Often had he wandered there, reading his breviary. Among the bushes, and between the fragments of rock which encumbered the dry bed of the torrent, he steered a true course. While the gendarmes still were fumbling in the darkness about the spot where he and Adeline had been revealed by the flash of lightning, he was come safely to the foot

of the steep slope leading upward to the Crows' Chapel—the deep hollow in the mountain side high up among the wild crags above the Nesque.

To carry Adeline up that steep ascent was impossible. He laid her down gently on the perfumed lavender growing there, and stood panting beside her—listening the while to the distant shouts of the gendarmes. They seemed to have gone the other way along the ravine. That meant, for the moment at least, safety. Presently Adeline sighed gently, and then spoke: "Are you here, Monsieur Randoulet? Have we got away from them?" And then she heard the distant shouting of the gendarmes, and gave a frightened little cry.

"Courage, my child!" the Curé answered. "They have missed us and here we are at the foot of the path leading up to the Crows' Chapel. If once we can get up there we may be saved. I know a hidden way among those rocks that even the goats have never found."

"I can be strong unto death, Monsieur le Curé," Adeline answered. "All that I ask of God is that he will not let me fall into the hands of that murderer. Come, let us start at once. You will see how strong I am." As she spoke, she got upon her feet and began to mount the ascent rapidly—catching at the tufts of thyme and lavender growing beside the path. Monsieur Randoulet followed her, but slowly and with shortening breath. About them the lightning played in vivid flashes, and the roar of the thunder echoed from side to side of the ravine and set the whole mountain to trembling beneath their feet.

CHAPTER XVI

IN THE CROWS' CHAPEL

AT last they reached the top of the long slope, wearied and breathless, and paused for a moment before they pressed on through the tangled growth which screened the mouth of the Crows' Chapel. As they halted, great drops of rain began to fall, and in the wind was a sudden chill—the chill that comes, in our mountains, before a cloud-burst. But they were safe at last, and Monsieur Randoulet raised his hands gratefully toward heaven as he exclaimed: "Oh God, I thank thee for this deliverance!"

"Qui vive?" came in a rough voice from among the bushes—and as they turned in fright toward the sound a flash of lightning showed them a man in a cocked hat, a gendarme they took him for, standing half hidden among the branches in the mouth of the cave.

"Qui vive?" the man repeated—and by another lightning-flash they saw that he covered them with a pistol.

"We are honest people, and we mean you no harm," Monsieur Randoulet said firmly. "If you also are honest, you will let us enter and shelter ourselves here from the storm."

"I am the Revolution!" the man answered. "I abhor priests! I abhor Aristocrats! If you

are of these, and advance another step, I'll kill you as I would kill a dog!"

"Well then, wretch, kill me as you would kill a dog," Monsieur Randoulet exclaimed. "I *am* a priest—a priest of the most high God!"

"And I," exclaimed Adeline, "am an Aristocrat—forsaken and miserable. I wish to die. Kill me, and you will save me from worse than death!"

Monsieur Randoulet held aside the branches as he spoke and advanced into the thicket, Adeline following him closely. At that instant came a flash of lightning so vivid that the mountain side was all ablaze with it, and Adeline and the Curé and the dark gendarme could see each other as plainly as though it had been broad day.

"Monsieur Randoulet!" exclaimed the gendarme. And Adeline and the Curé cried out together "Margan!"

"Well, come now," said Margan, stuffing his pistol back into his sash, "why didn't you say it was you?"

"Who could imagine that you could be here, Margan?" Monsieur Randoulet answered.

"You told me that there was a cave hereabouts," Margan explained, "and when I saw the storm coming I remembered about it. Says I to myself: 'I'll get the good of that cave for the night and keep dry there. That'll be better than getting lost in these big mountains and soaked in weather that is the curse of God!' And so I cast about for the path, and found it—and here I am. But why you two are here, who could have a good roof to shelter you, is more than I can understand!"

"I will make that clear to you, and more beside," Monsieur Randoulet answered. "I did not tell you our secret this afternoon. Then there was no need for it. There is a need for it now. She whom you saw with me dressed as a boy, she who is beside you now, is the girl to whom Pascalet sent his message—Adeline, the daughter of the murdered Marquis d'Ambrun. Her unhappy mother has deserted her. She is pursued by her father's servant, who was his murderer, and by another like him, who seek to kill her and so to gain possession of her estates. Against these the good Vauclairs gave her shelter while they could; then, being no longer able to protect her, Vauclair's brave wife Lazuli brought her to Malemort and gave her into my care. Here we thought that she would be hidden and in safety. But we were wrong. Barely had you left us this afternoon when we had warning that the gendarmes were come to Malemort in search of her. They followed her to the hut of La Garde. They almost had their hands upon her. Only by the grace of God did we escape from them and get safely here."

"And do you mean to say," Margan burst out, "that these are men of the Revolution who are persecuting the girl whom Pascalet, a good Revolutionist, loves with his whole heart —whom he lives for, and for whom he would die?"

"So they call themselves, my good Margan, but they are false to their name—the name that they have taken as a cloak under which they may undo what the Revolution has done. They are traitors who, as I verily believe, are paid by

the Aristocrats to bring the cause of holy Liberty into disrepute—to cast discredit on our new gospel, written in paraphrase of the older gospel, that we call 'The Rights of Man'!"

"But what's the Convention doing?" cried Margan angrily. "Are guillotines so scarce that they can't kill off this vermin of spies?"

"Do not cast stones at the Convention. The Convention is sublime—for it is France, it is the Republic, it is our all. Should the Convention fall, everything would fall. Then the kings of Europe would march conquering against us. Then the mire of Paris would spread over all France. Then the dogs of Aristocrats and their foul following would rise out of the earth like serpents and scorpions. All would be lost. On the ruins of the Republic once more would rise a tyrant's throne! Oh holy Convention! Oh glorious Convention! Oh vengeful arm of God! Finish to the full your work of justice!"

Under the great arch of the cavern—of which a whole mountain peak was the keystone—with the lightning playing about him, Monsieur Randoulet stood erect, commanding: speaking in a vibrant voice which rose above the roar of the tempest and which only the volleying thunder drowned. The storm was upon them in its wildest fury. A mighty and a rushing wind tore through the forest, uprooting huge oaks and rending away branches with a snapping like musketry. The cloud-burst had filled the bed of the Nesque with a tumultuous torrent which swept tree-trunks and rocks before it. The heavens were aflame with lightning, and the crashing thunder shook the great mountain to

its base. The solid earth seemed to be crumbling before devouring water and devouring fire.

But the very fury of the tempest carried it soon away from them. Onward it swept across the mountain tops toward the dark Luberon. Presently the clouds thinned a little, and then broke suddenly—and in the rifts shone steadfastly the placid stars. Between the claps of distant thunder they listened anxiously for the sound of voices, but heard only the gurgling of water in the gorge below them and the soughing of the wind. Then they knew that their pursuers had been turned backward—had fled before the wrath of God!

"We must leave you now, Margan," said Monsieur Randoulet. "This is our opportunity. Before daylight comes we must be in a sure hiding place, where we will be safe from those wild beasts of men."

"But you are not going to leave me at all. I am going with you," Margan answered; and added: "Do you think that I am going to let you go off by yourselves?"

"No, no, Margan. You have your own furrow to plough. What you offer us from your good heart we cannot take. Remember, too, that we are out of danger now."

"All the same, I'm going along with you," said Margan sturdily. "I shall make sure that you really do get safe away from that dog of the devil who is following you, and then I'll come back and give him the dressing that he deserves. But where are you heading for? Why not come on with me to Marseilles? That's the town for

you. It's crammed with good honest folks as full as it will hold!"

"No, no town is safe for us," Monsieur Randoulet answered. "In the great labyrinth of the city of Paris those who are seeking this unhappy girl found her; in the town of Avignon they found her again; to-day they once more have found her in the little village of Malemort. Our only chance of safety is here in the mountains among the wolves and foxes. Here we may hope that she will not be tracked and found. I have in mind a refuge for her—a lonely farmhouse not far from the village of Bédoin, high up on the slope of Mont Ventour. Good people live there who will shelter us and protect us. But we must hasten, now while the way is open to us. Our chance for safety lies in getting to that haven before the coming of the dawn. Come, my little Adeline, we must be off!"

"Monsieur le Curé," said the poor girl sadly, "I wish most that I might die!"

"Die? That is a wicked word—and not the word that I expected from a brave girl like you. Courage, my child! We must submit to the will of God. Who knows what He may have in store for you? He may be saving you now, in order that some day you may save Pascalet. Come, we will start at once."

"Forgive me, Monsieur. It was wicked in me to have that thought. I am ready."

"Yes, and so am I," said Margan. "I will go with you, at least, until we are in sight of Bédoin. I am in no hurry to get to Marseilles. The bowl of bouilleabaisse that I meant to sup to-morrow on the Cannebière will wait for me

—as it has waited for many a long day. A pretty thing it would be for Pascalet to hear that I had let his Adeline go off without me into the loneliness of these mountains and into the darkness of this night."

"If you insist upon going with us," said Monsieur Randoulet, hesitatingly, "it is not for me to refuse your offer. But——"

"All right, then, Monsieur," Margan struck in, "off we go together. I'll carry the little one's bundle; and I'd carry that loaf of bread, too, if only I had another hand."

"As to the bread," said Monsieur Randoulet, "perhaps I had better break it, that we each may eat a piece as we go along."

But breaking the bread was easier said than done. Even with a stone Monsieur Randoulet could not crack it; and when he flung it against the side of the cavern with all his strength it bounded back like a ball!

"Oùh!" cried Margan. "We had loaves like that up in the Dutch country of marshes, where we waded in mud to our thighs. We took our swords and our bayonets to it—but here we have neither bayonet nor sword."

"We do not need it now," Monsieur Randoulet said, "and our time is too precious to be wasted."

"March, then!" Margan cried cheerily, and they set off down the steep slope—digging their heels into the hillside and sending a hail of little stones, loosened by the rain, slithering down into the foaming torrent which filled the bed of the Nesque. Their way still was down the valley of the Nesque, but the walking was difficult

because they no longer could follow the bed of the stream. As best they could, they forced a passage through the bushes growing on the mountain side—coming now and again to a ravine down which a little torrent poured to join the greater one below. Across these streams Monsieur Randoulet carried Adeline, while Margan walked beside the Curé steadying and supporting him. And so, at last, they came to the bridge at Méthamis and crossed the river. Thence onward the way was easier—through the forest of Blauvac, and between the hills of Villes and of Mormoiron—and as dawn was breaking they came in sight of the village of Bédoin.

Hidden away in the forest which in those days covered the whole slope of Mont Ventour, this village was a refuge for the persecuted—for "suspects," for Moderates, for Whites. It was a forlorn place, built on the sides of a crusty little conical hill, crowned by a great church and a graveyard. A wall surrounded it, and outside of one of its gates was planted a liberty Tree. But for all that the village had a reputation for tolerant friendliness, they gave it a wide berth—passing on by the Moustier (where, as they learned later, mass was said every night, and where was a regular place of meeting for the many fugitives hidden in the mountains roundabout) and so to the top of the hill beyond.

"And now, Margan," said Monsieur Randoulet, stopping short, "you must leave us. Day is breaking, and we are within two gunshots of the end of our journey—the farm of Pèire-Avon in the mouth of the Combe de Cur-

CHAPTER XVII

A PERILOUS WALK THROUGH THE FOREST

FOR a moment or two Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline stood watching Margan's tall figure stalking away in the early morning twilight through the cool shadows of the forest; then they turned their backs on him, and by another path went on toward the Combe de Curmier.

It was a lucky thing for Margan that he had taken the Curé's advice and had left them when he did. They were separated from him by only a little distance when they heard the sound of many voices singing together, off ahead of them among the trees. The sound grew louder and clearer, and presently they could distinguish the words:

"Let us, adoring, praise
God whose strong arm
Virtue and innocence
Shields from all harm.
Our sweet Saint Géneviève
Knew his kind care—
Let us through her to Him
Make now our prayer!"

"It must be people returning from the mass," said Monsieur Randoulet. But he spoke doubtingly, and looked about him for a thicket that might serve them for a hiding-place. However, there was no time for hiding. In another mo-

ment the singers rounded a bend in the path but a few steps away, and the next instant Adeline and the priest were in the midst of a crowd of ill-looking young men—all armed in one way or another, and all wearing red fleur-de-lys in their hats and red crosses on their breasts.

And it was no mass that this ruffian party of Whites had come from! They were returning from robbing the house of the tax-gatherer of Caromb; and because the poor tax-gatherer had fought bravely in defense of the money of the Republic they had brought him along with them —his hands tied behind him, and a rope made fast to one of his ankles as though he were a pig being taken to market. The tax-gatherer had lapsed into the silence of despair, but the sight of the good priest gave him a little heart again and he fell on his knees among his captors and began afresh his entreaties. "If not for my own sake," he cried, "grant me mercy for the sake of my three little children who have no mother! The oldest of them is only nine years old! What will become of them without me? Mercy, oh mercy!"

But his captors—save to cuff him into silence —paid no attention to him. Crowding around Adeline and Monsieur Randoulet, brandishing their clubs and shouting "Vive le roi!" and "Down with the Republic!" they asked threateningly: "Who are you? Whence do you come?"

"We are honest travellers," Monsieur Randoulet. "I am the Curé of Malemort. We ask nothing from you. Let us pass on in peace."

"The Curé of Malemort," cried one of the crowd. "Why, he's a Blue!"

"He's not. He's a Red!" shouted another.

"I am neither a Blue nor a Red," said Monsieur Randoulet. "I am, as every one of you is, a servant of the omnipotent God!"

At that a brutal-looking fellow, who seemed to be the captain of that vile company, pressed forward exclaiming: "You are one of the rascal turncoat priests who took the oath to the Republic! You'll come along with us—and we'll give you the hanging that you deserve!"

Before Monsieur Randoulet could make any reply, Adeline sprang in front of him and cried: "Lou Mourre, how dare you! You shall not harm a hair of his head! I, Adeline d'Ambrun, forbid you!"

The man shrank back, instinctively obeying this word of strong command. But Monsieur Randoulet, laying his hand on Adeline's shoulder, said gently: "Hush, my child. I must speak to these men, I have a proposal to make to them." And then, turning to the others, went on: "Listen! Hang me, if you will. My death will injure no one. But, in exchange for my life, promise me that you will set this poor man free; and promise me that you will take Adeline d'Ambrun safely to the farm of Pèire-Avon—where she may rest secure until peace comes back among men. In the name of humanity and of brotherhood, grant me what I ask!"

"Didn't I say that he was a Blue?" called out one of the company. "Now you see I'm right. If he wasn't a Blue he wouldn't try to

save the tax-gatherer's life. Let's up with 'em both on the same tree!"

"Silence!" cried the captain. "I am the one to give orders here. For the sake of my mistress the Comtessine he shall finish his work. Let him loose, to follow his road—and may he never have the ill-luck to fall in with us again!"

"But first we'll search him," said the man who carried on his shoulder the bag of money stolen from the tax-gatherer. "His pockets are not likely to be empty, and he may have papers about him that we ought to see."

To this reasonable suggestion no one objected, and the search was made quickly and thoroughly. They found no papers; but they did find the handkerchief into which Janetoun had knotted the silver left by Lazuli and Jean Caritous, and this, and the loaf of hard bread, they took with a laugh. Then off they went—paying no heed to Monsieur Randoulet's entreaties to take him and to hang him in the poor tax-gatherer's place. As suddenly as they came, they went again into the forest—singing all together:

"Let us, adoring, praise
God whose strong arm
Virtue and innocence
Shields from all harm!"

Monsieur Randoulet knelt down in the leaf-strewn path and prayed: "My Lord God, have pity on them and forgive them what they do! I forgive them freely for the wrong which they have committed in taking from me the money and the bread. I, thy priest, in thy holy name which is blessed forever, absolve them from that

sin!" As he spoke, he made with two fingers the sign of the cross in the direction whence came, fainter and fainter, the sound of the holy song.

"That man was Lou Mourre, our swineherd at La Garde," said Adeline. "It was he who gave Pascalet a savage beating one day, long ago, when the hungry little fellow tried to snatch a cabbage stalk from our pigs."

"Yes, I remember him now," Monsieur Randoulet answered; "and I remember that he always was harsh and cruel. The poor tax-gatherer! There is no hope for him!" And Monsieur Randoulet's lips moved in prayer as they walked on toward the farm of Pèire-Avon.

Daylight had come. The starlings and the linnets and all the other little birds of the forest were flying out from the clumps of holm oak and were off, singing, to the plains. Far away sounded the barking of a hound, telling of a hunter come early to the chase. Now and again, through the openings between the trees, the peak of Mont Ventour was visible—tinted like a may-flower by reflections from the rosy clouds.

"Hark!" said Monsieur Randoulet, stopping short. "I think I hear the sound of sheep-bells. We are close to the farm now."

They stood still, listening. In the leaves above them they heard the soft thrill that comes at sunrise. Then the chatter of a jay, grating harshly on that deep forest silence. And then, with the clearness of a clarion, sounded the crowing of a cock. A moment later a dog barked sharply, and when the barking ceased

they heard the creaking of a pulley and the splash of a bucket in a well.

"Come on," said Monsieur Randoulet cheerily. "Here we are at last." But, instead of following the path, he approached the farm-house cautiously through the thick bushes. Adeline followed him closely, warding off the back-springing branches with her upraised arms. From the wet leaves the rain-drops came down on them in little showers.

In a few minutes they were standing just within the edge of the forest and saw close in front of them, surrounded by a high stone wall pierced by a single arched gateway, the great farm-house: a large and comfortable building roofed with red tiles and having above its roof a massive stone pigeon-house as big as a church bell-tower. Although the sun still was behind the mountains, the little rosy clouds which told of his coming had signalled to the living things of the farm establishment that it was time to wake up. Already the chickens and the pigeons were picking up their breakfasts; on the well-curb stood the peacock, as motionless as though he were made of enamelled bronze; from the long low sheep-fold—into which the sheep had been penned because of the furious storm—came a low tinkling of bells. Presently a shepherd lad came out from the farm-house; and the sheep, recognising his footsteps, set up a prodigious baa-ing: an anxious chorus in which were blended the deep bass-notes of the rams, the trembling higher notes of the ewes, and the clear treble of the lambs. When the door of the fold was opened, out they came in a hurry—

eager to nibble at the fresh grass—and with the shepherd lad following them moved toward the edge of the forest where Adeline and Monsieur Randoulet were hidden among the trees.

All was so peaceful that the Curé no longer hesitated. Coming out from the bushes, with Adeline close behind him, he advanced toward the shepherd, saying: "God be with you, little friend."

For a moment the boy was startled. Then, with a smile, he said: "Good morning, Monsieur le Curé. The Master will be glad to see you, though he'll wonder how you got here at this time of day from Malemort."

"How do you know we come from Malemort?"

"Why, Monsieur, don't you know me? I'm Cadoche, your own Janetoun's nephew. It would be a pretty thing if I didn't know where you came from—our own Curé!"

"Cadoche? So you are. But how you've grown! You are quite a man," and Monsieur Randoulet laid his hand kindly on the lad's shoulder.

"Yes, Monsieur, I'm almost grown up, now," the lad answered, much flattered by Monsieur Randoulet's recognition of his manliness. "Why, only yesterday—what do you think? I killed a hare!"

"Oh, come now, not really a hare. No doubt it was a leveret."

"No, Monsieur, it was not a leveret. It was a hare. A nine-pound hare! It is in the house now. Tell the Master to show it to you!"

"Well, well, we will go and see this wonderful hare," and smiling kindly at the boy Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline went on toward the farm-house.

"I remember Cadoche very well," Adeline said, a little hesitatingly. "He and Pascalet made their first communion together. He is wearing the very same suit of clothes that he wore that day."

"How can you know that, child?"

"Very easily, Monsieur. I made those clothes myself, and you gave them to him. I knew them at once, although now they are all in rags. They are just like the clothes that I made for Pascalet—the clothes that I have on now. Suppose the people here notice that? It makes me feel ashamed!" And tears began to trickle down Adeline's cheeks, and she flushed a little, as she thought of her far-off Pascalet and of what these strange people might say.

"Come, my child, this will never do! You must not get foolish fancies into your head, and you must not show yourself to these good people with tears in your eyes. They will not notice your clothes, I promise you—and this very day you may put on your frock again, for I shall tell them who you are."

Monsieur Randoulet's words comforted Adeline and soothed her. They halted for a few moments outside the arched gateway, while she dried her eyes and grew calm again; then they entered the court-yard and crossed it to the farm-house door. As is the custom in Provence in summer, the door was open and in the doorway hung a curtain to keep out flies. The Curé

raised the curtain, and said as they entered what was at once the kitchen and the living-room: "God be with you, Mèstre Tòni, and with all your house!"

In the room the whole farm family was at breakfast: Mèstre Tòni; his wife, Jeanne-Marie; five sons and two daughters. The eldest son, Marius, was a man of thirty years; the youngest, little Dodo, the nestling, was not yet twelve. The father and his sons were seated, the mother and her daughters were standing, at the long table on which were a big loaf of bread and a little barrel of anchovies and a jug of water—all of them "killing the worm," as our Provençal saying goes, before beginning the work of the day.

"Monsieur le Curé!" exclaimed Jeanne-Marie. "Good day to you! Good day to you!"

"Monsieur Randoulet!" exclaimed Mèstre Tòni. "Adessias, Monsieur. Why, where did you come from so early? Surely not from Malemort! But wherever you come from, you are welcome!" and he rose from the table and held out cordially his big hard hand.

"Yes, we have come from Malemort, my good Tòni," Monsieur Randoulet answered. "We have been walking almost the whole night long."

"Then I'm afraid that trouble of some sort is brewing. But sit down, sit down and have some breakfast. You must be starving! Jeanne-Marie, bring plates." As Mèstre Tòni spoke he moved up a little on the long bench on which he and his sons were seated, and motioned to

his sons to move down. Into the space thus made Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline squeezed themselves—their backs to the wall. In front of them was the huge chimney-place, high enough for a man to stand upright within it and wide enough to hold a whole tree-trunk. Against the rear wall stood the dresser, covered with shining vessels, and beside it the cupboard of waxed walnut wood—its iron lock and hinges shining like silver, and the great copper caldrons on its top as bright as the setting sun. In the front wall was a glazed window, hung with a blue and white checked curtain, through which and through the open doorway the morning light streamed in.

"Indeed I shall sit down very gladly," said Monsieur Randoulet, "and so will this poor child. We both are tired out after our long walk, and hungry too."

Adeline cast down her eyes before all these peasants who stared at her. She had said good day when she entered, but in so low a voice that no one had heard her. She sat absolutely silent—not daring even to glance at her lively little neighbour, Dodo: a little scamp no higher than a cabbage stalk who gave himself the airs of a man.

"Monsieur le Curé," said Mèstre Tòni, "in good time you will tell us why you have come here, and if you need our aid. If you do, you shall have it—that you know well. But the first thing for you to do is to eat your breakfast. Now then, who will cut the bread for these guests of ours?"

"I will," cried little Dodo, jumping up from

his place. "I will, with my new knife." He seized the sweet big loaf, almost as big as he was himself, and made over it—as he had seen his father do—the sign of the cross. Then he cut two great chunks from it and laid them before Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline.

But the Curé did not touch his portion, nor the toothsome anchovy that was set before him —smelling deliciously with its touch of vinegar, and lying in olive-oil as clear as moonlight. Shaking his head sadly, because of the sorrow that was in his heart, he turned to Mèstre Tòni and said: "Before I break bread with you, my poor Tòni, I must speak. You must know why we are come here. Listen! The times are bad, are full of dangers for us all. This child and I are in peril. We are obliged to hide ourselves."

"I understand," Mèstre Tòni answered. "I understand quite well. You are, as the saying goes nowadays, 'suspects.'"

"Yes, friend, in part you are right. But with this poor child the matter is far worse. This innocent creature is condemned to death!"

CHAPTER XVIII

AT PÈIRE-AVON FARM

As Monsieur Randoulet spoke these words, sadly and gravely, there was a momentary silence and the eyes of the whole family were turned upon Adeline. It seemed impossible that the death sentence could have been pronounced upon one so innocent and so young.

Mèstre Tòni was the first to speak. "Are you in earnest, Monsieur!" he asked in astonishment. "Is this really true?"

"Yes, it is really true," Monsieur Randoulet answered sorrowfully. "But I have more to tell you. This poor child is not a boy, but a girl. She is the daughter of the Marquis d'Ambrun, who was lord of Malemort. A detachment of gendarmes, led by a murderer, is searching for her. Only last evening they were close upon us. In the darkness and the storm we escaped from them, and all night long we have been walking among the mountains. We do need your help, if you can give it without danger to yourself. What we ask of you is a safe hiding-place."

The women shivered and went white as Monsieur Randoulet spoke, but Mèstre Tòni kept both his courage and his presence of mind. Speaking quite calmly, he said: "Run, Dodo,

and throw down some hay to the horses and mules—and as you come away lock the stable door," and as the little fellow went off nimbly to execute his order he added to the Curé: "There are four gendarmes asleep in the hayloft. They are searching the mountains for deserters and stopped here for the night. But don't be uneasy. The key will be turned on them in a moment and they will not trouble you. We have them here often, and as I always treat them well they do us no harm."

For all that Mèstre Tòni spoke so quietly and so easily, Monsieur Randoulet was alarmed—not for his own safety, but for the safety of his host. Rising from the table, and taking Adeline's hand, he said earnestly: "My good Tòni, this will not do. We shall compromise you. We must leave you at once!"

"What do you mean!" cried the farmer, with a bang of his big fist on the table. "Don't you know me well? Do you think that I'm going to let you go wandering off into the forest again—you and that innocent child? Oh no, that is not the wood I'm made of! If a whole brigade of gendarmes was at the door we'd stand them off—me and my five sons! Do you see that row of guns hanging in the chimney-throat? With pepper-pots like that all handy we're not afraid of gendarmes!" And then, more quietly, he added: "But there's no need for fighting now. Those fellows in the hayloft did not get here until midnight, and unless I wake them they'll snore away till noon. Long before that time you'll be in a place that all the gendarmes in France might look for without

finding. So sit down, Monsieur le Curé, and eat your breakfast in peace. When you have finished it comfortably, Dodo will lead you to the hiding-place I'm talking about."

"Why, where is Dodo?" Monsieur Randoulet asked. as he took his place again at the table. "What's become of him?"

"He's doing what I sent him to do," Mèstre Tòni answered. "He's up in the big pear tree beside the threshing-floor watching that no strangers surprise us until you are safe away."

"But he'll lose his breakfast," said the kind-hearted Curé in a tone of remonstrance and regret.

"Oh no he won't. He took a big piece of bread along with him, and he'll eat it very comfortably up there among the birds. Presently, when you have finished your meal, and when he has made sure up there that no one is coming, he will lead you to where you are to be hidden —the Cave of Two Holes. There, with the good souls, three poor nuns from Avignon, already in hiding, you will spend the day. When night comes I will fetch you back here again, to sup and to sleep."

"But is not the danger by night as great as the danger by day?" asked Monsieur Randoulet.

"It is greater," the farmer answered, "but not here for us and for you. As I have told you, when the gendarmes come I treat them well, and they deal with me kindly. At night, if they stop here to rest, I put them in the hayloft—where some of them are now. They do not enter the house. In the morning I give them a

good breakfast and they go. As for the others, they fancy that I side with them and they let me alone. But I am fortunate. For most people living in lonely places, and for all people unlucky enough to be overtaken by darkness in the forest, the night is full of peril. Bands of deserters, bands of Aristocrats, are abroad then—pillaging and burning and killing in the King's name. They call themselves the 'Companies of Jehu' —this rabble; and they claim to be Royalists or Papalists. But it is not the King nor the Pope, but the devil, whom they serve—as they go, gun in hand, knife in teeth, with rosaries about their necks, doing evil as does the hail! It is more than I can understand why they all are not swept from the earth by the thunder of God!"

"Not two hours ago," said Monsieur Randoulet, "we met with one of these companies. They had been robbing the tax-office at Caromb and were dragging away with them the tax-gatherer, bound as they should have been bound themselves."

"By this time he is a dead man," said Marius. "They have strung him up to an oak, and under him have lighted a fire."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Monsieur Randoulet, and his horror was so great that he turned very pale.

"No, Monsieur," Marius answered, "it is not impossible—it is the terrible truth. That is what these wretches do. Lucky are the unfortunates who are hanged before the fire begins to blaze! While the fire burns they dance around it, shouting 'Hurrah for the King! Hurrah for the Austrians! Down with the Republic!' and then

fall to yelling like the fiends that they are. Often have we heard their cries—and later have found the half-charred body of a man swinging from an oak-branch above the still-smouldering embers of a fire!"

"And they come," exclaimed Monsieur Randoulet, "out of the earth's rottenness! Those whom we met this morning were commanded by a cruel brute who once was the swineherd at La Garde! Yet even he was not wholly given over to evil. At the command of his young mistress here, the Comtessine, he suffered us to go free." And then, as he remembered another phase of the encounter, the Curé added: "What little money I had about me was taken. You will have to suffer us to be your debtors, my good Tòni, for our food."

"You forget, Monsieur," interrupted Adeline, "I still have my three crowns. With those we can pay the good Mèstre Tòni—at least, we can pay him in part."

"There, that is enough," said Mèstre Tòni very decidedly. "Money is not a thing to be talked about here!" and with that he shut his knife with a snap. When the master of a Provençal household shuts his knife it means that the meal is ended, and at that sign all who were seated at the table arose.

"And now," he went on, "you and this pretty boy-lady must be going, Monsieur. It is not that I wish to get rid of you, as you well know; but with those four gendarmes asleep in the hayloft, it is only prudent that you should be hidden away before they wake up. Dodo, here, will lead you to the cave; and you must be sure

not to venture out of it until I come for you to-night."

Never in all his good life had Monsieur Randoulet been in hiding! Tears came to his eyes, and in his heart he cried: "My God, what have I done to offend thee that I must hide myself in caverns with the foxes and the wolves!" But he set a strict guard upon his lips and uttered no complaining word.

Presently they were off—Dodo, called down from his watch-perch, leading them and carrying a fat wallet stuffed with food for their mid-day meal. Up they went along a steep and stony path through a thick growth of beeches. The wild mint and the flowering broom, growing near by, filled the air with an aromatic perfume as the strong rays of the sun—by this time well risen above the mountains—fell on them hotly. Now and again a covey of partridges would fly up suddenly, with a loud br-r-r-r! Off on the left of the path rose the great crest of Mont Ventour, bare rock against the sky. Lower down, the mountain was clad with a growth of big trees—oak and beech and ash and larch. Here and there upon its flanks were wide spaces overspread with box and thyme and lavender and wild flowers smelling sweet. Along the pathway—among the leaves which gave cover also to sleeping vipers—bloomed white violets.

To Adeline the flowers were a delight—her friends, her little sisters who were smiling on her. She ran hither and thither gathering them—here a gillyflower, there a bunch of white violets, yon a branch of wild-roses whose delicately gay pink blossoms seemed like laughing baby

faces. Monsieur Randoulet and Dodo, walking on steadily, drew farther and farther away from her. At last a turn in the path hid them from her altogether, and a little thrill of fear went through her as she realized suddenly that she was alone. She hurried on after them—and her thrill of fear became terror as she saw, through an opening in the forest that gave her a glimpse down the mountain side, a man with a gun on his shoulder coming rapidly up the path. In an instant she was off at a run; and in a few moments had overtaken the others. "A man is following us!" she panted. "A man with a gun!"

They all stood still, listening intently. At first they heard nothing. Then, as the man came to a rocky part of the path, they heard through the silence of the forest the sound of footsteps and the rattle of little stones. The forest about them was open. There were no bushes which would serve as a hiding-place. They could only hurry on—hoping either to distance their pursuer, or to come to some cover that would shelter them while he passed them by. But the forest was more and more open as they ascended, and in a few minutes they left it altogether and came to a part of the path which curved around one of the peaks of the mountain—following a narrow ledge, just wide enough to walk on, with a sheer wall of bare rock rising above it and a sheer drop of a hundred feet or more to the ravine below. To look into that dark depth made Adeline's head swim. With closed eyes she followed Monsieur Randoulet, holding fast to his hand. Their feet sent stones

from the path rattling down into the gulf. In a minute or two they heard the sound of other stones falling, and knew that the man was close behind them.

"Dodo," said Monsieur Randoulet, "you and Adeline must go on without me. Take her to the cave quickly. I shall stand guard here."

"Do not send me away from you," Adeline entreated. "I will meet this danger with you," and she kept a tight hold upon the Curé's hand.

"You must obey me, and instantly!" said Monsieur Randoulet, in a tone of severe command that Adeline never had heard him use. As he spoke, he stood at the outer edge of the path and held fast above her head to a projecting rock. "Go on!" he said sternly. In another instant she had passed him. Then she went onward, holding Dodo's hand.

Monsieur Randoulet gave his soul into God's keeping and waited. The footsteps were coming very close to him. He did not believe that he had many more minutes to live. Suddenly the man coming on around the curving path began to sing:

"Turn the wheel, my gossip Jane,
Spin away!
Turn the wheel, my gossip Jane,
Night and day!"

Monsieur Randoulet's tight-drawn heart-strings relaxed as he heard this old country-side song. "A man bent upon evil does not sing songs like that!" he thought. He was right. In another moment he was face to face with Marius, the farmer's eldest son!

"Why, Monsieur Randoulet!" exclaimed Marius. "What are you doing here alone? Where are the others?" And then, as he saw how pale the Curé was, he added: "I do believe I've frightened you!"

"You have," Monsieur Randoulet answered simply. "I thought that you were a White. I sent the others on ahead and waited here."

There was a tone of respect in Marius's voice as he answered: "Whites are not dangerous by day, Monsieur. They prowl by night—along with the other wild beasts. Now I will tell Dodo that there is no cause for fear," and he put his fingers in his mouth and whistled sharply twice. "Dodo must have been crazy," he added, as they walked on together, "to bring you by this path. We call it 'the Devil's Dyke'—it is the worst of all."

"Then there are others?" said the Curé, sighing thankfully.

"Certainly. There are two others—one over the mountain top and the other down there in the ravine. The little scamp should be spanked for bringing you this way."

Dodo undoubtedly did deserve a spanking for his bit of mischief—it was just that—and he certainly would have got one had not Monsieur Randoulet begged him off. As it was, Marius gave him such a talking-to that he was a very sober and crestfallen little lad for the rest of the walk!

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE CAVE WITH THE TWO HOLES

THEY all went on together a little farther, and then Marius halted the party where a thick clump of terebinth and a big black bunchy juniper grew together on the mountain side a little above the path. "Here we are!" he said.

"Where are we?" asked Monsieur Randoulet blankly.

"At the mouth of the Cave with Two Holes, Monsieur."

"But I do not see even one hole!"

"It is here, Monsieur—hidden by the terebinth. Show them the way in, Dodo."

"Wait a moment," said Monsieur Randoulet. "Now that I know where the entrance is, let me try to find it for myself." But he could not find it, though he searched about the terebinth and the juniper carefully.

With a laugh, Dodo opened out the thick-growing branches of the juniper and, stepping in among them, disappeared!

"It is a safe hiding-place, Monsieur," said Marius. "The entrance to the cave is there under the branches; and as the juniper is an evergreen the opening always is concealed. No one knows about the cave save ourselves, and one or two people in Bédoin, and the wild

creatures of the forest. As my father told you, all the gendarmes in France might come here and search for it in vain. And there is plenty of room down there. You go a little way along a narrow passage, and then you come to a large cavern that is dimly lighted from this opening: beyond it, at the end of another passage, is a still larger cavern that is lighted by a hole high up in its vault—a hole on the bare peak of the mountain that cannot be reached from the outside by anything but a bird. And now, Monsieur, if you please, we will go in."

Marius led the way, holding the branches aside for Adeline and helping her to descend through the narrow opening which they so well concealed. Monsieur Randoulet followed. Inside they found Dodo waiting for them. Together they passed through the dimly lighted outer cavern, and the passage beyond it, and so came to the well-lighted inner cavern—where they found the three nuns who, as the farmer had told them, were in hiding there. These holy women, who were refugees from the Ursuline Convent in Avignon, very gladly welcomed as companions in their prison-like retreat a consecrated priest and—when the secret of her disguise was revealed to them—a sweet young girl as pure and as lovely as the saints in Paradise.

Dodo deposited the wallet of food on a rude mass of rock in the centre of the cavern that served for a table, and then the brothers turned to go away.

"Stop, Marius," said Monsieur Randoulet, "you are forgetting your gun."

"I am not forgetting it, Monsieur. I am leaving it here for you."

"For me? What need have I for a gun?"

"Guns have their uses, Monsieur—and especially in these bad times. Keep it here, and should you go out from the cave I beg of you always to carry it with you. You would find out your need for it in a hurry should you chance to meet a gendarme!"

"But I would not use it even though I did meet a gendarme. God preserve me from the sin of killing a man!"

"You need not kill any one, Monsieur. But a gun, even an empty gun, is a good thing to frighten people with. Should you go out from the cave, carry it with you—that is my last word. And now good-bye until evening."

Monsieur Randoulet made no reply aloud, but as Marius left the cave he exclaimed in his heart: "A gun! Holy Mary! How wicked is man! How cruel! But in my hands, at least, this gun will do no harm. It will not be the Curé Randoulet who will kill a fellow man!" Then he stood the gun in a corner of the cave and turned to talk with the three nuns.

They had had a hard time of it, these poor Sisters. The youngest of them, Sister Margai, had been the turkeyherd at Pèire-Avon as a child; and when they escaped from Avignon she led the others—Sister Dorothy and Sister Scholastica—to the shelter of her old home. For three nights they had walked in dread, and for three days they had lain hidden in the bushes or among the growing grain. Their black habits and their black veils were torn by the briers,

their white coifs were soiled and limp, their leather belts—from which their rosaries hung—were fretted by the twigs and thorns. Sister Dorothy, whom the others called Mother Dorothy, was an old woman. But for the help that they had given her she could not have accomplished this hard journey. Even with that help it had made her suddenly much older, and all of them had reached the haven of the farm-house haggard and worn. For more than two months they had been in hiding, sleeping in the farm-house and spending their days in the cave. The kindness of the farm-people had done much to restore their cheerfulness, and their coifs were spotless again—but the carefully darned rents in their veils and in their habits matched outwardly the scars that were in their hearts. Against the wall of the cave they had fastened up a picture of the blessed Magdalen in her hermitage-cavern of the Sainte Baume—not two days' journey from the cavern in which they were lying hid—and to this great Provençal Saint, to whom the earth had given shelter as to themselves, they made their daily prayers.

For a while Saint Mary of Magdala was forgotten when Monsieur Randoulet told them that his young companion was not a boy but a girl, and that this girl was the Comtessine d'Ambrun. In a moment they had ranged themselves before her and were making her profound courtesies and formal compliments. They were her servants, they said; and gave effect to this declaration by waiting upon her when, at noon-time, they ate their midday meal. When they found that the bundle that she had brought with her

contained her frock, they packed Monsieur Randoulet off to the outer cave and delightedly dressed her in it—taking a lively interest in its still pretty trimming of Paris lace. At night, when Dodo came for them, he was mightily astonished to find that the boy whom he had scared so well on the Devil's Dyke was a girl!

Dodo did not venture to repeat that trick. He led them by the safe path in the valley, to which they descended by a safe and not very difficult way. It was a pleasant path, bordered by thyme and box and lavender and wild-flowers, and overhung by many trees. The two journeys that they took along it daily were the delight of the cave-dwellers, the brightest break in their dull lives. Adeline and the nuns sighed for the freedom of that sweet solitude in the hours of sunshine, and found very tantalizing the glimpses that they had of it in the morning and the evening dusk. "Ah," Sister Scholastica would say, "if only we could spend our days in this flowery woodland, where all is peace and tranquility and where there are no men! It is like a beautiful convent made by God's own hands!"

They never could be made to understand, these poor nuns, why it was that they had been compelled to run away from Avignon and hide themselves. They only knew that one day some of their friends had come to their convent saying "La Guillotine has come! You must run away from her this instant!"—and had hurried them off. "La Guillotine," they thought, must be some wicked woman. But everything was hazy and uncertain in their minds.

Monsieur Randoulet tried to explain matters to them, but quite in vain. The Revolution was a hopeless mystery that they could not penetrate. They could see no reason why the poor should not keep on starving in quiet, as they always had done; why, suddenly, they should make such a fuss about it. Still less could they understand how the King could have been cast into prison, and thence brought out again to have his head cut off. What were people doing, they asked, that such things were suffered to be? Where were the estrapados and the racks, the prisons, the galleys, the gallows? Those were what was wanted when starving wretches, daring to become troublesome, showed their teeth and took to snapping with them—like hunger-driven wolves! Nor could they understand why, since it had been done for centuries, the King and his nobles were committing wrong in treating the serfs of the soil as though they were beasts and worse than beasts. They could not grasp even the rudiments of Monsieur Randoulet's meaning when he told them that God Himself had breathed Holy Liberty into the handful of clay out of which He made man. No matter how much Monsieur Randoulet explained and expounded, in the end it always was the same. The Sisters rested firm in their conviction that their good King and their good nobles could do no wrong.

Sometimes these talks went on in the evenings at the farm-house—the nuns busy with their needlework, the farm women with their spinning—and then Mèstre Tòni would take part in them. He was one of those sound and

true and temperate Republicans who were the very salt of the Republican faith—of whom, alas, so many were sent to the guillotine precisely because they were so good and charitable and truly wise! What Monsieur Randoulet said, he agreed with; and he had much of the same sort to say for himself. It annoyed him that the good Sisters were so dull of understanding; and one evening, when they were even more than usually obdurate, he blurted out suddenly: "You think that they can do no wrong, these over-lords of ours? Now let me tell you what one of them did to me, to me myself, when I was living in Malemort. Just listen to my story, and when I have finished it I shall be glad to hear what you have to say! This happened not more than twenty years ago, and everybody at Malemort still remembers it and can tell you that it is true."

"I, for one, remember it very well," said Monsieur Randoulet, who knew what was coming, "and you may believe every word that Mèstre Tòni says."

"Well," continued Mèstre Tòni, "what happened to me was this: My people, working hard for the money, had managed to save enough to buy a little bit of waste land up there behind the château of Saint Félix: the château belonging to the Bishop of Carpentras, to which he and his canons used to come with certain of their friends —whom we won't talk about—to amuse themselves. Naturally enough, this fine lot did not like having anybody close to their walled inclosure. They wanted to be alone up there; and so, one fine day, what does the Bishop do

but send word to me that each time I wanted to work on my bit of land I must get his leave to come there! That was much more than I could swallow, and I sent back word to him that if he wanted to buy my land I would have it valued and he could take it at the valuer's price; but that until he did buy it it was mine, and that while it was mine I should work on it when I pleased.

"Well, I thought that settled the matter, and two or three days later I put my hoe on my shoulder and went up to hoe the vetches I had planted on my land. As I went along up the Saint Félix road I met a woman I knew. She began to giggle when she saw me and asked: 'Are you going to hoe your vetches, Tòni?'

"'Yes,' says I. 'They need hoeing badly.'

"'You'd better go back home,' says she, 'the crows have eaten them all up,' and she fell to giggling again. But I only laughed at her and went on.

"A little farther up the road I met one of my neighbours who was carrying to Monsieur le Marquis—to whom they belonged by right—the tongue and the jowls of a pig he had just killed. When he saw me he took to sniggering and called out: 'Going to hoe your vetches, eh Tòni?'

"'Yes,' says I.

"'No you're not,' says he. 'No you're not—the crows have gobbled the whole of 'em!' And he gave me a queer sort of look and passed on.

"Well, I concluded that he and the woman were trying to put some sort of a joke on me,

and I hurried along to my vetches, thinking that when I saw them I'd know what the joke was. And I did know what it was—but the joke was not one that made me laugh! What do you think? When I got to my piece of land I found a gang of masons at work on a nine-foot wall that inclosed it completely and made it a part of the inclosure of the Bishop's château! Well, I was in a fury! I raged and I menaced! The masons laughed at me and went on with their work. They were good-natured fellows or I should have fared worse. I heard later that they had been ordered to stone me off my own land!

"Nor is that the whole of the wrong which was done me. That evening there came to my house in the village a halberdier who brought to me an order from the Bishop to leave Malemort before the following daybreak. I and all my family must go, and instantly, the fellow said, or I would be put in the strapado and my tongue would be pierced with a red-hot iron—because, he explained, I had used menaces against the Bishop and because in my anger I had taken the name of the Lord in vain! There was nothing for me but obedience. Remonstrance with that scoundrel Bishop only would have made matters worse. In the night we left Malemort, carrying as we could what we most valued with us—my wife heavy with child. By God's blessing, Monsieur de St. Croix, who owned this farm, took pity on us and gave us shelter here—and here, ever since, we have remained.

"And now, Mother Dorothy, what have you to say that is good of an over-lord like that?"

asked Mèstre Tòni in conclusion, at the same time bringing his fist down on the table with a thunderous bang!

But Mother Dorothy did not venture to say anything; and until Monsieur Randoulet and the farmer began to talk again there was only the click-clack of the winder and the roun-roun of Jeanne-Marie's wheel.

Often, though—for in that quiet nook among the mountains it was hard to realize that over France a tempest was raging—the evening talk was of a lighter sort. The farmer and his sons would tell stories of hunting expeditions into the mountains; the good Sisters would wander through rather pointless anecdotes of their placid life in the convent; late in the evening—spinning slowly, or altogether stopping her wheel—Jeanne-Marie would bring out from her pack of country-side lore some grisly legend—as that of the hell-hound Dog of Cambaud—which would send the young folks to bed with creeps down their backs and staring eyes!

So the days lengthened into weeks, and the weeks into months; and while the quiet life at Pèire-Avon now and then was disturbed, it never was interrupted, by the rumour of the mighty tempest which was crashing and rending over the length and breadth of France.

CHAPTER XX

THE EDGE OF THE STORM

FROM time to time Marius, the eldest son, went down from the mountains to Carpentras to sell some of the farm produce or a batch of sheep and lambs. There he would hear what was going on in the world and would bring back news of it. But it was not easy for the dwellers at Pèire-Avon to believe in the stories of horrors which he brought back with him, and still less easy to believe that these stories had any meaning for themselves. Even when Marius brought the news that Maignet, the terrible Auvergnat, had come down to Avignon they did not feel that this was a matter which concerned them—it all was so hazy and seemed so far away.

To be sure, Maignet's red record was not made then. It was he who set up the Revolutionary Tribunal in Orange that did its work without *procès-verbaux* or juries; that in less than two months—between the 1st Messidor and the 17th Thermidor of the year II—sent three hundred and thirty-two persons to the guillotine. It was he who arrested the famous Jourdan Chop-head and denounced him—of all things in the world for a man with such a nickname!—for "moderation," and so brought him under the knife.

From his next visit to Carpentras Marius came back pale and trembling. At supper he sat silent, unable to eat. To the questions which were put to him—was he ill? was he in trouble? had he been robbed?—he made no answer. From time to time his eyes would rest on Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline, and then he would grow still paler and would shake as though a fever had him in its grasp.

His mother followed him to his bed-room, taking with her a cup of good borage-tea that she made him drink piping hot; and then, sitting on his bed-side, she got the truth out of him.

"We are lost, mother!" he said in a low and frightened voice. "The end has come for us!"

"How are we lost? You are wandering, my child."

"No, mother, it is the truth. To-day I saw posted up on the church door in Carpentras a list of the 'Suspects.' In that list are the names of Monsieur Randoulet and Adeline. Their denunciation is signed by one Calisto. It declares that they are known to have fled toward Bédoin, and that they probably are hidden in some farm-house on Mont Ventour."

"But we know all this, my son. Even our good nuns are 'suspects.' Don't be frightened for so little. No one will come after any of them here."

"But there is more, and worse, mother. It seems that a company of Whites, the other night, came out from the forest and seized two loads of ammunition going forward to the army

and tumbled them into the waters of the Ouvèze. Then they went on to Sarrians and robbed the tax-office. Then they came to Bédoin—where they robbed the tax-office, and tore down and trampled in the mud the decrees of the Convention, and cut down the Tree of Liberty outside the Porte Saint Jean."

"Yes, we heard about that. But what has it got to do with us?"

"It has a great deal to do with us. When that wolf-hound of a Maignet heard about it he fell into one of his wild rages and swore a dreadful vengeance. He has given orders that all the people of Bédoin shall be arrested, that the town shall be destroyed utterly, that the very ground on which it stood shall be left forever waste. And all this is to be done, mother," Marius went on in a trembling voice, "this very night! A detachment of gendarmes is on its way to Bédoin now, and with it is a whole battalion from the Ardèche. They are to arrest every one; they are to search the town; then they are to burn it. After that they are to search all the farm-houses round about. They will come here, mother—and what will happen then? We are lost, I tell you! We are lost!"

Jeanne-Marie had turned as pale as her son. She left him hurriedly, and went back to the kitchen to tell the dreadful news.

"Well, how's the boy?" asked Monsieur Randoulet.

"The boy wouldn't go badly, Monsieur, if things went well."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Mèstre Tòni.

"I mean," burst out Jeanne-Marie, "that the gendarmes, and a whole army along with them, will be here to-morrow. I mean that the whole country-side is to be searched. I mean that everybody in Bédoin is to be arrested and cast into prison, and that the town is to be burned to the ground!"

All the women shrieked together, and Mèstre Tòni sprang to his feet with a bound. "Malediction of God!" he exclaimed. "What sort of justice is this? Are we, the good people, to pay for the sins of the bad? What is that Convention at Paris doing that such things should be?"

"Peace, Mèstre Tòni!" said Monsieur Randoulet in a tone grave and solemn. "Peace! Do not blame the Convention! The Convention is patriotic and just. In its justice it abolished the laws of the Tyrant; in its patriotism it is guarding the frontiers of France against strangers in league with her own traitor sons. It has done its duty, even, when in its passion it drenched the scaffold with the impure blood of Aristocrats. Its one error—and this error may prove to be its ruin—has been in sitting in Paris: that royal city, that tyrant city, that city of anti-patriots and cowards! Paris is a torch which lights the world—but it is a torch set in a muck-bed where swarm the foulest of the foul! There thrive such creatures as Surto and Calisto, who slay and plunder. There thrive such creatures as Hébert and Henriot and their like, who dread the honest patriotism of the Girondists and who have sent Danton—the patriot Danton who led our Marseillais to the storming of the Tyrant's

castle—to the guillotine. Think of it, Danton! He who, a sprig of thyme in his mouth, proclaimed the Republic; who abolished those laws of the Tyrant under which a bishop could confiscate the poor man's scrap of ground; who was the very soul of our holy Revolution! They laid him where they had laid Louis Capet, on the very same plank; with the very same knife that had beheaded the Tyrant they beheaded that great patriot!"

For a moment Monsieur Randoulet was silent. Then, with his hands clasped and raised toward heaven, and in a tone still more impassioned, he continued: "Oh Lord my God, thou who art the Father of all; thou who orderest the stars in the firmament and biddest to swell the tides of the sea; thou whose eyes are lightning, whose voice is thunder, whose frowning is the tempest; thou who art the source and the beginning of all life, from the life of man even unto the life of the smallest earth-grown herb; thou, oh holy and merciful God, show thy pity to us and give us thy help! If—even as the roses need thy dew and thy rain—the Tree of Liberty, overthrown by the wicked, needs the blood of man to make it rise again and put forth new branches, take to the last drop the red stream that is in my veins. Willingly, that good may come, will I go to the guillotine as to thine altar—blessing thy name because thou art thyself Justice, who holdest in thine hand the balance of Equality!"

The women sighed heavily. Mèstre Tòni, in a sad tone but with firmness, said simply: "You are right, Monsieur. If the bread of bitterness is to be our portion, we will eat it. If we must

burn the harvest to rid the earth of evil weeds, so shall it be!"

The children—Adeline and Dodo and Cadoche—came in from the sheep-fold in a state of great excitement. "There's something wrong over at Bédoin," said Dodo eagerly. "We heard the drums beating the alarm."

"And I," said Cadoche, "thought I heard people shrieking. But I couldn't be sure."

"I didn't hear anything at all," said Adeline. "I was inside the sheep-fold playing with the lambs."

"Well, we'll find out what it means in the morning," said Mèstre Tòni. "Now be off to bed, the whole lot of you. It's time for everybody to be asleep."

The household obeyed him—the boys going off to the hayloft, Adeline and the nuns to the mattresses which were laid for them in the granary, and the farm women to their beds. But Mèstre Tòni and Monsieur Randoulet staid in the kitchen, keeping watch and guard.

Nothing came to disturb them. From time to time the deep silence of the mountains was broken by the barking of a fox or the hooting of an owl; and about midnight they heard the drums beating again in Bédoin, and a confused murmur as of wails and cries. Later, they heard cries clearer and more distinct, as though from people fleeing toward the forest pursued by the gendarmes. Mèstre Tòni drew the inference that the ravaging of the village was completed and that the gendarmes were beginning the search of the outlying farm-houses. It would not do, he said, for Monsieur Randoulet and the

rest to wait until dawn, as usual, to go to their hiding-place; they must get away and be safely hidden while yet it was black night.

Adeline and the Sisters were roused out of sleep, and the good Jeanne-Marie—whom dread had kept wakeful—was called to get together a supply of food that would last them all for three or four days, in case the search should be so hot that they could not safely be sent for at night to come back to the farm. Dodo also was waked, to go along with them and carry the bag of food. To the provisions Mèstre Tòni added a gourd full of powder and a handful of balls—but against taking these Monsieur Randoulet rebelled. "Keep your powder and your balls, my good Tòni," he said, "I have no use for them."

"But you have a gun, Monsieur. And what good will your gun do you, when once you have fired it, unless you can load it again?"

"But never shall I fire that gun! I am willing to carry it, because I may frighten some one with it; but fire it, I tell you, I never shall!" Yet in the end, as the easiest way to quiet Mèstre Tòni's importunity, he slipped the balls into his pocket and carried the gourd along.

As though the good Curé felt the shadow of evil approaching him, he lingered behind the others and made his parting with the farmer a very serious one. "In case we never meet again, my good Tòni," he said, as he held the farmer's hand in a tight clasp, "I want you to know that I thank you from my heart for your great charity. And, believe me, what you have rendered unto us God will render again unto you."

"Do not talk about our not meeting again, Monsieur," the farmer answered. "It is true that for two or three days, very likely, we shall not see each other. I shall not send for you until this pest of gendarmes has passed away and you may come again in safety. But then you will come back to us once more, and all will be well."

"God grant that it may be as you say. And may He, whatever happens to us, always guard and protect you!" And Monsieur Randoulet slowly relinquished his grasp of the farmer's hand, and then hurried to catch up with the others on the path. The night was dark, although the stars were shining, and very still. They went on upward through the forest in silence, save that the nuns murmured softly their prayers. From time to time came faintly the sound of shrieks or of hoarse shouts from the direction of Bédoin.

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE DEVIL'S DYKE

DAWN was close at hand when they reached the terebinth and juniper, and through the thick-growing branches groped their way into the cave. Being inside, Monsieur Randoulet lighted the candle that he had carried with him and led the way to the inner cavern; and there Dodo put the bag of food on the rock table and turned to go.

Monsieur Randoulet, with tears in his eyes, embraced the little fellow and kissed him. "You are a good boy, Dodo," he said. "You have helped those who are in trouble, and for that God will reward you. The Whites stole everything from me. I have nothing to give you—I wish I had. Stop, though! I have a little picture of Saint Maximin. Perhaps you would like that," and he pulled the leaden balls and the little gourd of gunpowder from his pocket and gave them to Sister Scholastica to hold while he searched for the picture.

"I have three crowns," said Adeline, and she laid her precious three crowns on the rock. But Dodo turned his head away quickly, as though the sight of the silver hurt his eyes. "Thank you! Thank you!" he said. "Indeed I don't want anything at all."

"And here is my rosary," said Sister Dorothy.

"And here is a little leaden image of the Virgin," said Sister Margai.

"Oh how unhappy I am!" exclaimed Sister Scholastica. "I have nothing at all that I can give to this good little boy who has been so kind to us!"

"Indeed, indeed, I do not want anything," Dodo repeated.

"Will you not take my picture of Saint Maximin?" asked Monsieur Randoulet.

Dodo shook his head.

"Nor Mother Dorothy's rosary?"

Dodo shook his head.

"Nor Adeline's three crowns?"

Dodo shook his head most emphatically.

"Well then, take the little leaden Virgin."

"Yes, take it," said Sister Margai eagerly, and she put the image into Dodo's hand and kissed him. "Don't you remember," she added, "how you used to want this very image, long ago when I was the turkeyherd here at the farm? Well, now it is yours!"

Dodo did not refuse this offering. He seemed to be thinking very earnestly, his eyes fixed upon Sister Scholastica standing there with her hands full of powder and balls. "I am so sorry, Dodo," Sister Scholastica repeated, "that I have nothing to give you."

"Perhaps," said Dodo, insinuatingly, "you will give me a little powder from the gourd?"

"That I will!" said Sister Scholastica, delighted to give the boy anything; and before Monsieur Randoulet could stop her she had un-

corked the gourd and had filled with powder Dodo's outstretched hand.

"But what do you want with powder?" asked the Curé.

"To load my pistol."

"You have a pistol? Surely you do not want to kill anybody?"

"Oh no, Monsieur. I want to get the eaglets that are in the nest on the very top of the Combe de Curmier. With my pistol I can keep away the old birds. Now I shall have the eaglets for sure! And this is the very time for it—when the old birds fly out from their nest in the early day!" Chuckling with delight, Dodo said "Adessias," and was gone!

They were silent for a moment after he had left them, and then Mother Dorothy said shortly: "That boy will go climbing into some dreadful place and get killed!"

"Sister Scholastica would have done better had she thought a little before giving him the powder," said Sister Margai, primly.

Poor Sister Scholastica was covered with confusion and did not say a word.

"I know where the nest is," said Adeline. "I heard Dodo talking to Cadoche about it yesterday. It is in a very dreadful place, just as Mother Dorothy says. It is up on the precipice above the Devil's Dyke—that awful path along which we came that first day. Dodo never can climb up there. He will tumble down into the gulf and be killed!"

Monsieur Randoulet was very seriously perturbed. In a way he felt that he was responsible for the peril into which the boy was going;

that he should have prevented the gift of gunpowder which made the eaglet-hunting possible. He walked backward and forward in the cave uneasily, while the shadows thinned as the morning light came pale through the opening high above him. He tried to read his breviary: but his mind ran neither on the Lord nor on the Saints of the Lord—but on little Dodo, whom he seemed to see dropping backward from the face of that great precipice, and flashing downward, and lying mangled on the cruel rocks below.

At last he could stand inaction no longer. He felt that it was his duty to go after the boy and to try to save him—no matter what the peril to himself might be. In spite of the entreaties of the nuns and of Adeline not to take so great a risk—at the very moment when the gendarmes were scouring the mountains—he shouldered the gun that had stood for so long in its corner and went out from the cave.

Full day had come, and as he stepped out from the branches of the juniper he was fairly dazzled by the brilliant May sunshine. But the sunshine, of which for so long he had seen so little, was delightful; and he gave a sigh of happiness as he breathed the fresh sweet air. For a minute or two he stood quite still, listening. But only the soft noises of the forest were about him, and he went on toward the Devil's Dyke quite at his ease. As he walked, he prayed in his heart that Dodo might be turned back by a wholesome fear from his dangerous enterprise; and then the comforting thought came to him: "After all, he forgot to ask for ball. It would do him no good to charge his pis-

tol with powder alone." But with this thought, suddenly, came another thought: "Why was he so eager to have the little leaden image of the Virgin?" And in an instant the Curé perceived the whole of Dodo's naughty scheme. Cut with a knife into little pieces, the leaden Virgin would serve to charge the pistol very well indeed! In point of fact, that was precisely what Dodo had done with his Virgin as soon as he was fairly outside of the cave!

Very anxiously Monsieur Randoulet listened as he began the passage of the Devil's Dyke. The curve of the path around the mountain prevented him from seeing along it for more than a few feet. He listened for some sound of Dodo's scramblings, and so earnestly that he did not think at all about gendarmes. The nest, as Adeline had explained to him, was above the path at a point where a fig-tree grew out from a crevice in the rock and overhung the precipice. There the path was at its narrowest, a ledge but a few inches wide. A couple of rods above it was another ledge that joined the path farther along, toward the farm-house. It was broader than the path, and a stranger would be apt to follow it—until he found that it ended in the air!

The Curé came in sight of the outgrowing fig-tree, and gave a sigh of thankfulness because Dodo was not visible—and then drew a quick breath, as he thought that Dodo already might be lying dead in the gulf below! He paused—uncertain as to whether he should search farther for the boy or should return at once to the cave. While he stood irresolute, a little stone came rattling down the mountain side and shot past

him into the chasm. He looked up quickly. On the ledge above him, watching him fixedly, stood a gendarme!

Monsieur Randoulet did not know about the false path, but he did know that for him to turn back and to make for the shelter of the cave would be to betray those who were hidden there. Escape down the mountain side was possible only for a bird: yet, involuntarily, he glanced downward—and a fresh terror seized him as he saw another gendarme coming up the valley. To go ahead was his only course. The upper path, where the first gendarme stood watching him, must join the path on which he was, he reasoned—if he could reach that junction first, and get on past it, there was a chance that he might reach the cover of the thick woods. Once in the woods, he very well might lie hidden until nightfall. Then, without endangering the others, he might be able to get back to the cave. And so, as fast as he dared to walk in that perilous path, he hastened onward, his heart beating hard and sweat pouring from him. In a minute or two he came to the out-jutting mass of rock where the fig-tree grew and where the path was but a span wide. Holding fast to the knobs and crevices of the rock, he rounded the projecting rock—and found himself face to face with a third gendarme!

Had he been alone, this gendarme—cumbered with his gun and his sword and his big boots with their long spurs—would not have been very dangerous. He had slung his musket over his shoulder by its strap, and was holding fast to the mountain side for dear life

as he slowly worked his way along the ledge. He was not used to work of that sort, and he was a badly scared man. But he was a worse scared man when Monsieur Randoulet—old instincts reviving in him—took advantage of a better bit of standing room to unsling his own gun and to level it. The gendarme went pale as death at that. As he tightened his grip upon the rock he gasped in a frightened voice: "The Law!"

"For whom are you searching?" asked Monsieur Randoulet.

In the same gasping and frightened voice the man answered: "For the Curé of Malemort and for the daughter of the ci-devant Marquis d'Ambrun."

"I am the Curé of Malemort!" Monsieur Randoulet answered.

"I arrest you!" said the gendarme, his instinct of duty for an instant getting the better of his fears. Then he turned still whiter, as he realized what was likely to result from his words.

Monsieur Randoulet's finger was upon the trigger of his piece. He had but to twitch that finger and the gendarme, who sought to lead him to a prison out of which he would go to the guillotine, would be a dead man—crashing down into the chasm with a bullet through his heart. But Monsieur Randoulet, a true priest of God, was not of those who manned the racks of the Inquisition and did to death their fellow creatures in the name of the Most High. His instinctive act of self-defense was checked as he remembered the stern Commandment: Thou Shalt not

Kill! In another moment he lowered his piece from his shoulder, and said in the tone of a man who utters his own death-warrant: "I give myself up to the Law!"

At that instant there was a burst of smoke among the branches of the fig-tree above them, the sound of a shot that went echoing along the mountain sides—and the gendarme, with the point of his cocked hat shot away and his face torn and bloody, fell sidewise along the face of the rock with a shriek, caught for a moment on the ledge, went over it, and then stopped again as by sheer chance he grasped a juniper stump, and so hung above the abyss.

Looking up into the fig-tree Monsieur Randoulet saw Dodo perched among the branches, his still-smoking pistol in his hand. "Run! Run, Monsieur!" cried Dodo. "The blessed Virgin has saved you! He can't hold on for a minute. You can get safe away!"

But while Dodo was speaking Monsieur Randoulet had stepped cautiously and quickly to where his enemy was dangling above the jaws of death. The man was utterly panic-stricken—so lost in his desperate fear that he had not heard Dodo's voice, and was sure that the Curé had fired upon him. His wound, however, was not a serious one. Dodo's blessed Virgin had given him a good peppering, but had done him no great harm.

"Hold fast for a moment longer," said Monsieur Randoulet. "With my hand under your shoulder you will be able to get up again into the path." These words gave the gendarme a little courage. His desperate grip, which was

beginning to loosen, grew firm again. Helped by Monsieur Randoulet's strong grasp—given at the immediate peril of his life, for a false move would have sent them down the cliff together—the gendarme slowly raised himself to safety; and then, still helped, crawled along to where the path broadened and he could seat himself with his back against the mountain side. Kneeling beside him, the Curé wiped the blood from his face. Presently the man got back his breath and his understanding. Grasping Monsieur Randoulet's shoulder he said: "I arrest you!"

"That," said Monsieur Randoulet, as he continued to wipe away the blood, "is your duty."

CHAPTER XXII

BEFORE THE REVOLUTIONARY TRIBUNAL

On hearing the pistol shot, the gendarme in the valley below and the gendarme on the mountain side above hastened to their comrade. Finding him wounded, and finding the gun that Monsieur Randoulet had left in the path, they drew a natural conclusion. "Murderer! Wretch!" they cried. "How dare you fire on a gendarme of the Nation?" In a twinkling they had bound him fast with cords, as a murderer would have been bound.

One of them put the muzzle of his pistol to the Curé's forehead. "I don't see why I shouldn't blow your head off," he said. "You are one of the gang who cut down the Tree of Liberty. You are of the traitors who are waiting for the Austrians to put a Tyrant once more on the throne!"

"We might as well tumble him over the cliff," said the other, "and so have done with him!"

Monsieur Randoulet—fearful for Dodo, who was shivering up in the fig-tree, just around a turn in the path—made no reply. So long as they thought that he had fired the shot Dodo was safe. Even should they go back and pass beneath the fig-tree, the path there was so diffi-

cult and so dangerous that there was little chance of their looking upward. But they did not go back. They went forward. One of the gendarmes helped along his wounded comrade; the other walked behind Monsieur Randoulet, pistol in hand. There was no need for a pistol. Carrying his old gun slung on his back, where the gendarmes had hung it, the good Curé went with them as meekly as a lamb.

When they got to the end of the Devil's Dyke, instead of keeping on toward the farmhouse, they turned into the forest and made directly for Bédoin. Through the openings between the trees, off across the valley, they could see the little town distinctly; but all was still there; the drum-beating and the cries and shrieks had ceased. The sun shone out strongly. Threads of gossamer floated in the air waveringly, showing against the pale blue sky like star-rays. The only sound was that of their own rustling footsteps and of the buzzing of wild bees about the rosemary blossoms. There was no clicking of hoes from the fields below in the valley. As they crossed the valley they found it deserted. It seemed like a Sunday.

As they neared Bédoin pitiful sights met their eyes. Many of the villagers had been arrested and shut up in the great church which crowned the conical hill whereon the village was built; but many more, outcast from their homes, were congregated in miserable groups in the near-by fields. They had brought with them some of their belongings. Here was a little heap of household-furniture, there a little pile of linen; goats and donkeys were tethered to posts; chickens strayed

around. Most of the women were on their knees, weeping and begging for mercy, their terrified children clinging fast to them. The men, stupefied, stolid, sat with their elbows on their knees and their chins in their hands watching the preparation for their utter ruin. For, coming and going among them, the soldiers of the Fourth Ardèche Battalion were bringing great fagots of holm-oak from the neighbouring hillsides and were piling these fagots in the houses, in the streets, everywhere—making ready for the fire which that evening was to destroy the town. Nothing was to be left of it. Bédoin the infamous was to be wiped out in flame from the sight of man!

But these broken men and women were better off than those which the village still held —the "suspects," before whom was a terrible death: a death compared with which the guillotine was merciful and a gun-shot grace. As these were passed, with a mere show of trial, before the Revolutionary Tribunal they were dragged up to the crest of the town and thrust into the great church—facing the open space known as the Plan de Maudène—there to wait for the coming of night-time and the coming of the flames! To make this hellish work of destruction the more sure, a barrel of gunpowder had been placed in the church, with a slow-match leading down from it to the Portail du Catarin. And then, in the fields around the village, were the wives and the fathers and the mothers of those who were to die in this horrible fashion—watching the building of the death-pyre, and unable to lift a hand!

Guarded by the gendarmes, Monsieur Randoulet passed through this dismal company. The fagot-carrying soldiers laughed when they saw him. "Hello, Aristo!" cried one, "we're going to boil you!" "So you hadn't wood enough to warm yourself without cutting down the Tree of Liberty, eh?" said another. "Well, you shall have wood and warmth a-plenty now!" Even the villagers cried out against him—believing that he really was one of the Whites who had drowned the wagon load of gunpowder and cut down the Bédoin Liberty Tree, and so had brought destruction to their homes. They cursed him as he passed, they threw stones at him; they tore his clothing. Presently he was bleeding and in rags. Silently he went onward, praying in his heart for God's mercy.

The gendarmes led him into the long and narrow room in which the Revolutionary Tribunal was sitting—the three judges on a dais, a tightly packed crowd below. As he entered, one of the judges glanced at him sharply and then rose in his place. "Was this man alone when you captured him?" he called out to the gendarmes.

"He was quite alone."

"That cannot be. There must have been a girl with him—the daughter of an Aristocrat."

"He was alone," the gendarme repeated.

"Citizen," said the President of the Tribunal, addressing his fellow Judge, "we will look after this fellow when his turn comes. Give your vote now for the one before us. He is accused of 'Moderation,' and of having in his posses-

sion—contrary to the decree of the municipality of Carpentras—more than half a pound of sugar and more than a quarter of a pound of oil. What is your verdict?"

"Death," answered the Judge in an absent-minded tone, as he continued to stare at Monsieur Randoulet.

"Death," said the other Judge.

"Death," said the President. "The verdict is unanimous."

The condemned man uttered a deep groan. In a moment he was hurried away to the church, to die that night in the flames.

"I demand," said the still-standing Judge, "that this Aristo just brought in by the gendarmes be tried at once."

A murmur of approval ran through the crowd. For some reason they believed that this was the very White who had cut down their Liberty Tree and so had brought upon them overwhelming disaster.

"So be it," said the President; and Monsieur Randoulet was brought to the bar between the two gendarmes, the third gendarme, with blood-smeared face, coming forward as a witness. "Of what is he accused?" asked the President.

"He is a priest," answered the standing Judge, leaning forward with his fists on the table and glaring at Monsieur Randoulet savagely.

"I have taken the oath of allegiance to the Republic, and I have remained true to my oath."

"Why were you carrying that gun which is slung over your shoulder?"

"To protect myself against the Whites, who haunt the mountains."

"You lie!" cried the wounded gendarme. "It was to fire on the gendarmes of the Nation. Look at my face!"

"I never have fired a shot at a fellow creature. It is God's command that man shall not harm his fellow men. I have kept that law."

"I am the proof that he lies," said the gendarme, and he thrust himself forward that the judges the better might see his wounds.

"The proof that I am telling the truth," said Monsieur Randoulet, speaking in a calm voice, "is very easily produced. If you will examine this gun you will find that it still is loaded, and that it has not been fired off for a long, long while."

One of the gendarmes, thinking to confound him, snatched the gun from his shoulder. But the gendarme himself was confounded. The inside of the barrel was rusty and dusty. When he ran in the ramrod he found the charge in place. He gave a low whistle, and passed the gun on to his comrade who had been wounded. The wounded man, also testing the gun, was lost in amazement. "But if it wasn't you, who was it?" he asked, blankly.

Monsieur Randoulet evaded this question. "Had it been I who fired upon you, friend," he asked, "why should I have saved you from certain death when you were falling over the precipice?"

"I'm sure I don't know!" answered the puzzled gendarme.

The standing Judge broke in sharply: "Then some one was with you?"

"I was walking alone," replied the Curé.

"Miserable wretch! Will you swear that you do not know where is hidden Adeline, the ci-devant Comtessine d'Ambrun?"

"I will not swear," Monsieur Randoulet answered.

"That is enough," said the standing Judge. "That answer settles the matter," and he sat down.

"Then you confess," said the President, severely, "that you fled into the mountains with the daughter of the ci-devant Marquis d'Ambrun?"

Monsieur Randoulet made no reply.

The President turned toward the Judge who had just seated himself and asked: "Citizen Calisto, what is your verdict?"

"Death."

"Death," said the other Judge, without waiting to be asked.

"Death," said the President. "The verdict is unanimous."

CHAPTER XXIII

A LIFE LAID DOWN

A MOMENTARY stir of satisfaction went through the crowd, and then all eyes were fixed on the next in line to come before the judges. But the President, instead of ordering Monsieur Randoulet off to the church, where the other condemned men were, said to him: "Have you anything to reveal that may be of service to the Republic? The Tribunal permits you to speak."

"Yes," Monsieur Randoulet answered, speaking slowly and gravely, "I have a revelation to make; and, also, I wish to point out to you the yawning chasm into which there is danger that the Republic may plunge." Pausing a moment, he continued: "There are hypocrites, villains, tools of the Tyrant, who traitorously profess to serve the Republic to the end that they may destroy her. I, Citizen Randoulet, Curé of Malemort, faithful to the Constitution, can name and deliver up to justice one of these traitors!"

"Don't listen to that old wind-bag," cried a man in the crowd. He was not a Bédoin man, but a stranger who had come along with the soldiers for the sake of plunder. Wrapped in a cloth he carried a silver pyx that he had stolen

from the church. As he spoke, he inverted the pyx above Monsieur Randoulet's head and showered over him the holy wafers that it contained.

"Let him go on," cried a dozen persons in the crowd, eager to hear the revelation. The President stopped in his work of writing out the formal condemnation and regarded Monsieur Randoulet, covered with the holy wafers, fixedly. Judge Calisto, impatient with this interruption, leaned back in his seat and gnawed his nails savagely. The third Judge took advantage of the lull in the proceedings to lay his head upon the table and go to sleep.

"This traitor to the Republic," Monsieur Randoulet went on calmly, "is a nobleman's servant. He has murdered his master, and he has stolen his master's money and lands and name. He was of those who plotted to rescue the Tyrant on the day that he was executed. Under menace of death he has compelled a ci-devant Marquise to sign a paper consenting to his marriage with her daughter. By this showing, he is at once a murderer, a robber, a traitor, and a coward. Now, to-day, this monster has put on the red cap of Liberty, and in the name of Liberty has denounced as a 'Moderate' one who has helped to thwart his marriage with the daughter of the Marquise. I can name this Aristocrat in disguise, this tyrant's tool. I can cause his arrest and his execution: for the wretch carries on his person the proof of his crime. A murderer, a robber, a traitor, he is thrice deserving of death!"

As Monsieur Randoulet ceased speaking he fixed his eyes on Calisto. Those eyes, usually

so gentle, glowed with a holy anger that made them burn into Calisto's breast. Involuntarily his hand went to his pocket to draw out and to throw away the paper signed by the Marquise d'Ambrun. Then the futility of his action became apparent to him. With his hand grasping the paper he sat still, scarcely daring to breathe.

"Speak," said the President. "Denounce this traitor!"

"I shall not denounce him," Monsieur Randoulet answered, his eyes still fixed upon Calisto.

"If you refuse to denounce him, you share his crime—you become a traitor yourself."

"I dare not cause a fellow creature's death."

"By denouncing him you may win a pardon for yourself."

"It is better that I should die, and that this wicked man should have time for such repentance as will win for him the pardon of God!"

The President, out of all patience, brought down his fist on the table with a bang. "Gendarmes!" he cried, "take this condemned man out of my sight!"

Calisto drew a long breath of relief. He smiled grimly, as his hand came out of his pocket and fell by his side. The third Judge, aroused from his slumber by the bang on the table, raised his head drowsily and said: "I vote for death!"

A chattering broke forth in the crowd as way was made for the condemned man to pass. "If what he says were true," said some, "he would speak out." "We know him," said others—"he is not a man to lie. He has his own reasons for keeping silence." The wounded gen-

darme looked after the Curé in a state of complete bewilderment. "What I want to know," he said, "is who peppered my face!"

Before the Tribunal the work of arraigning and condemning went on. By nightfall sixty-three persons had been sentenced to death and shut up in the church of Bédoin. Among them were six nobles, four notaries, two nuns, and six priests. All the rest were hard-working peasants—most of whom could not tell for what they had been condemned. These last were the bravest of all. Without trembling, they waited for death. The nobles, arrested the day before in the gorges of Mont Ventour, held themselves aloof even in their extremity from the peasants. With the fear of death marked on their faces, they made a group apart in the choir—where, presently, they were joined by the priests and the nuns. Monsieur Randoulet, alone of the priests, remained among the poor—the innocent martyrs in a cause that was not their own.

As the hours passed on many of the peasants, perceiving their hopelessness, gave themselves over to angry despair and fell to cursing the nobles and the priests who had led them into the revolt which was ending so miserably. "Would that God had willed, as He might have willed, that I never had laid eyes on you!" shouted an old peasant, shaking his fist at the nobles. "You dragged my plough out of my hand, my good plough that fed my wife and children, and you gave me a knife to kill my brothers with! And you, you priest, you lied when you told me that the King was the right

arm of God and that Liberty was the daughter of hell!"

From the nobles and the priests came no answer to this impassioned cry; but it served to fire the rage of the other peasants—who by force or fear had been led by the Aristocrats into their bitter strait. "Wretches!" they howled, "is this what you promised us? Where is the Austrian army that was to bring the King back to us? Where is the God who was to work a miracle and protect us? It is you who have brought us into this snake's nest. While a little life is left in our bodies we will pay you for having befooled us—we will pay you with our hands! We will tear out the tongues that have lied to us! We will choke you to death before we ourselves die!" With yells of hate the half-crazed creatures pushed toward the cowering nobles and priests. In another moment they would have made good their words.

Hurrying forward, Monsieur Randoulet checked this furious advance. "Brothers!" he cried. "Brothers! The hour of death is the hour of repentance, of forgiveness—not the hour of revenge! God is good! God is just! If in true penitence you ask His mercy, He will remit your sins and forgive you. But He commands that you also forgive these who have sinned against you; whose falsehoods have led you along the way of error to the gates of death. In sign of your repentance, I exhort you to say with me 'Amen!'—that, in His name, I may absolve you from your sins!"

Monsieur Randoulet raised his hand in blessing and the peasants wavered. Suddenly

from the depths of the choir one of the priests called out: "Trust not in him. He is forsworn. God denies him!"

But the peasants halted.

"He is a Republican. He has denied his religion."

The peasants clasped their hands and bowed their heads, waiting for the benediction.

"He is a 'Blue.' Long live the King!"

At the words "a 'Blue,'" the peasants raised their heads again and recoiled from the good priest as though he had been a scorpion. To these poor Royalists, a priest who was false to the King seemed a creature utterly execrable. They cursed him and hooted him. But his intervention had saved, for the moment, the lives of those in the choir. Satisfied with that, he withdrew from among the angry peasants and in a corner of the church knelt in prayer to await the death that was coming to all of them so soon. He prayed for his fellow prisoners, and for the peace of his own soul; but most earnestly did he pray for the safety of those whom he had left behind him that morning, hidden in the cave. "Lord! Have mercy upon them, and guard them, and save them!" he cried from the depths of his tender and troubled heart.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BURNING OF BÉDOIN

THOSE for whom Monsieur Randoulet, with the shadow of death upon him, thus earnestly prayed, the nuns and Adeline, were torn with anxiety when the cave grew dusky with the gloom of evening and still he did not return. Soon after he had left them they had heard, and had been terrified by, the sound of a shot. Through the long day they had sat huddled together, thrilling with fear. It was worse when night came. God seemed to have forgotten them. Their prayers became supplicating moans.

Suddenly the hole in the top of the cave, through which the sweet peace of the stars had been shining like a smile from God, grew blood-red—and the stars vanished in the crimson glare.

"God in heaven! What can be the meaning of that?" cried Adeline in a tone of terror.

"It is a sign of death!" moaned Sister Scholastica. "It is a sign of death!" and she buried her face in her hands that she might not see the crimsoned sky.

But Sister Margai, whose childhood had been spent among those mountains, took the matter more coolly. "You are foolish, Sisters,"

she said. "It is only a fire lighted by some shepherd up on the heights of Mont Ventour. The shepherds and the farmers often make signals to each other by lighting fires."

"Who knows, then," said Mother Dorothy, "if it be not our dear Curé—lost in the mountains and asking that way for help?"

At this suggestion Adeline rose to her feet. "I shall go in search of him," she said. And added, speaking very quietly and very firmly: "In trying to serve Monsieur Randoulet I am not afraid of gendarmes nor of wolves—not even of Calisto himself." They were in the outer cave. As she spoke, she began to ascend by the narrow passage to the cave's mouth. The Sisters followed her. In another minute they were standing on the open mountain side—broadly overlooking the great plain of Provence and the Comtat, and directly overlooking Bédoin. So hellish was the sight before them that horror struck them dumb! The whole of the little hill on which Bédoin was builded was encircled by a mighty girdle of fire!

Over the devoted village hung high a black pall of smoke. Below, writhing everywhere like serpents, were huge tongues of flame. For a moment the flames would shoot upward and disclose toppling blackened walls; then they would fall again and hide everything in a devilish glare. The smoke was rising higher and higher—to the very stars—like a black waterspout. In the reflected light of this fury of red flame the seven spines of dark Ventour were bathed in crimson—and the intervening gorges were as black leeches wallowing in blood.

While they watched, the three gates of the town fell blazing—and the outer flames rushed through the openings and charged into the masses of brushwood piled everywhere in the streets. In an instant, it seemed, a vast pillar of flame mounted upward and pierced with a murderous crimson the overhanging black smoke canopy. Then the brushwood within the five hundred houses caught, with a sudden terrible puff of flame; and after that the doors and window-frames and floors and rafters of the houses themselves—and a very mountain of flame ascended with a mighty roar. Higher still rose a whirlwind of flying sparks, that flecked the smoke-blackened heavens with crimson stars and that churned the outer edges of the smoke-cloud into a bloody foam. To the very gates of heaven seemed to be mounting the fires of hell!

In the midst of that glowing furnace, the great church on the crest of the hill remained unconsumed. Its thick walls reddened in the intense heat and fell away in fiery fragments, but their mass stood firm—until the barrel of gunpowder did its work. Suddenly there was a dull roar, a quaking of the earth—and then through the shattered rose-window and through the shattered windows of the aisles came black clouds of smoke so mighty and so dense that for a time they darkened the furiously glaring flames.

At that climax of that devil's work there sounded a merry rolling of drums—and the watchers on the mountain side saw black shadows capering against the dazzling brightness as

the destroyers of Bédoin danced about it ar exultant farandole! Outside the line of farandolers, plainly visible in the fire-glare, were the desolate ones whose homes were vanishing ir smoke and flame.

Spellbound, Adeline and the three nuns stooc shivering with horror as they gazed at this mos awful spectacle—until they were aroused by a close peril of their own.

"Look! Look!" Adeline exclaimed in a frightened whisper. "Over there in the bushes! Surely there is a man there—a mar with a gun!"

They held their breath while they peerec into the bushes and listened intently. They saw nothing, but in a moment they distinctly heard a rustling among the branches. The next instant a man emerged from the bushes and advanced toward them. His figure loomed black against the brightness beyond. He carried a gun on his shoulder. Dazzled by the glare behind him, they could not see his face. With a scream they turned to run.

"Stop! Stop!" cried the man. "Do not be frightened. It is I, Marius!"

"Oh, how you scared us!" said Sister Margai as Marius joined them.

"I could not come to you sooner," Marius explained. "All day long the gendarmes have been searching the mountains. It would have betrayed your hiding-place to them had I come before I was quite sure that they were gone."

"Tell us," asked Mother Dorothy, "what all this means? And tell us what has become of our dear Curé? Is he at Pèire-Avon?"

Marius shook his head sadly. "My poor Sisters, my poor Adeline," he said, "I fear that never again will you behold him!"

"What do you mean?" Adeline asked in a tone that thrilled with dread.

"I mean," Marius answered brokenly, "that early to-day the gendarmes found him and carried him away prisoner. He—he was brought before the Revolutionary Tribunal. By now that holy man has perished—off there in those flames of hell!"

As Marius spoke these awful words Adeline fell into the arms of Mother Dorothy, her teeth clinched and her eyes fixed in a stare of horror. Her senses left her. She grew cold and rigid. She seemed a dead woman as they carried her back into the cave and laid her on a bed of leaves.

When, after a long while, life came back to her, her reason was gone. The shock of Monsieur Randoulet's dreadful death—of which, as it seemed to her, she was the cause—had turned her brain. She babbled senselessly—calling: "Pascalet! Pascalet! Come and save our dear Curé, who is dying for me!" Shivering fits seized her. Sweat poured from her. She half rose, crying: "I see him! I see him! Come quick, Pascalet, and save him from Calisto! Oh, come quick! Come quick!" And she shook her fist at the nuns who were ministering to her, as though they were the Curé's murderers.

The nuns strove to soothe her, holding her gently in their arms. "Yes, yes, dear child," said Mother Dorothy. "Pascalet is coming to

save him. Pascalet will be here presently, and he never will leave you again!"

"He'll never leave me again," Adeline answered. "No, he'll never leave me again. Never!" And she laughed shrilly. But her laugh was only with her lips. Her eyes remained fixed in a horrified stare.

Toward morning she grew quieter. Her eyes softened, and the few words that she spoke showed that her reason was coming back to her. As daylight began to thin the shadows in the cave she grew drowsy; and the nuns, weary from their sad vigil, nodded to each other as much as to say: "It is over, now." And then, suddenly, through the stillness of the early morning came the roll of drums beating the alarm; and a little later the sound of firing, volley upon volley, crashed upon the sunrise silence. Adeline started up from her bed of leaves with a shriek. Again she grew rigid, and again the fixed look of horror came into her eyes. With a gasp she fell back, swooning. When her long swoon ended her mind was a clouded blank!

Well might the sound of that firing craze her, for it meant that over in Bédoin the last touch was being put to the devil's work that had stained that night with an immeasurable crime. When morning came, and the village was a smouldering mass of ruins, the great church still stood guard upon the hilltop. The gunpowder had riven its walls, the flames had consumed the wood-work in the belfry and had brought the bell crashing to the ground, but the building was not destroyed. Therefore there

was a chance that some of those who had been shut up in it before the town was fired still might be alive. Calisto was not a man to leave anything to chance in working out his revenge. He had sworn the death of Monsieur Randoulet —who stood between him and Adeline—and he meant to make that death sure. Taking with him some men of the Ardèche Battalion, he passed upward along the hot street through the smoke of the ruins and entered the church through the smoke-blackened open doorway.

Calisto's move was a prudent one. While the sixty-three prisoners in the church had suffered all the pain of a most dreadful death, they still were alive. The soldiers found them stretched upon the stone pavement, as they had fallen when the smoke and heat bereft them of consciousness—many cruelly wounded by the volley of stones that had been discharged among them by the exploding gunpowder. As the heat died down, and as the fresh morning air came in through the gaping windows, they slowly were reviving, breathing heavily and uttering moans of pain. Monsieur Randoulet had not been hurt by the explosion. He had risen to his feet and was standing in one of the side chapels. Calisto saw him in a moment, and in another moment had seized him and had dragged him outside. To the soldiers he gave the order to bring all the prisoners down to the little open space in front of the Porte St. Jean. There, over the stump of the Liberty Tree, had been set up the guillotine.

Half supported, half dragged by the soldiers, the miserable prisoners—uttering piteous cries

and entreaties—were brought down through the wreck of Bédoin. Some of them, still stupefied by the heat and smoke, walked wonderingly, as in a dream. Others, crying out, resisted fiercely and had to be driven onward by force. Monsieur Randoulet alone made no resistance and uttered no sound. As they were halted, beside the guillotine, he was in the front rank. The executioner, leisurely turning up his sleeves, was standing beside the knife.

The Curé was the first to mount the scaffold. "The Tree of Liberty has been cut down," he cried in a firm voice, "but in the ground below me its root remains. May my blood water that root. May the Tree of Liberty grow again; and God grant that it may throw out fresh branches which shall shelter humanity from the injustice of tyrants!"

Guided, not forced, by the executioner, he took his place. There was an instant of deep silence. Then the drums rolled, the knife fell—and the root of the Tree of Liberty was watered with the blood of a just man!

The six nobles followed. When their heads had fallen the head-basket was full. The executioner coolly carried the basket to a near-by gully and emptied it. Then came the priests, and after them the two nuns. The knife was dulled. To sever the head of the second nun the executioner was compelled to drop it twice. A shiver of horror went through the soldiers on guard, with arms presented, about the scaffold. Their commander, Suchet (he who became a Duke of the Empire under Napoleon, and under Louis XVIII a peer of France) showed a little

mercy. By his order, the remaining prisoners were shot. Ranged against a wall, the soldiers fired volley after volley until all were dead. The sixty-three bodies were thrown into the watercourse that was the common sewer of Bédoin.

CHAPTER XXV

WHITE TERROR REIGNS

WEEKS and months passed before reason returned to Adeline. One morning she awoke smiling, no longer frenzied with fear, no longer shrieking for Pascalet to protect her against Surto and Calisto and La Jacarasse. To her astonishment she found herself in a bare little room exquisitely neat and clean. Against the wall hung a holy-water font in which was a spray of blessed olive leaves. Sister Margai was bending over her. "Where am I?" she asked—half believing that she dreamed.

"Dear Adeline," Sister Margai answered, "you are in God's own house. You are in the Convent of Saint Ursula of Avignon. When we came back ourselves we brought you with us. Here you are in safety. Our troubles are over. The evil times are at an end."

Sister Margai spoke what she believed to be the truth. While Adeline's consciousness had slumbered momentous changes had been worked in France. A new order had been established. The Red Terror had been overthrown. The wave of the Revolution upon which Robespierre had risen had ended by sweeping him away. He who had guillotined the Monarchy in the person of the King, and the Moderate Republic

in the persons of the Girondists, and the Democratic Republic in the person of Danton the Just, himself had kissed the block. With him had perished the fierce patriot Saint Just, and Couthon the friend of the poor.

But with the passing of the Red Terror, the reign of the White Terror had a clear field. Forth from their hiding-places poured the vermin of the monarchy—dogs of nobles and canting bigots who prayed to their false god that the armies of the stranger might conquer their own land of France. In their wake came companies of thieves and murderers—who robbed, who killed, who burned the harvests, who did all in their power to weaken France and give the foreigners an easy victory. The guillotine, that sharp knife of justice, worked in God's sunshine; but these Companies of Jehu—with the cross on their breasts and the fleur-de-lys in their hats—did their vile work in darkness, as became beasts of prey.

Calisto, a thief and a murderer, naturally consorted with these murderers and thieves. He was one of the very first—when France was shaken by the fall of the knife of the Ninth Thermidor—to whip off his red cap, and with a fleur-de-lys cut from it sewed to his breast to get at the head of a robber company. With them he joined in the shout: "Long live the King! Death to the Republic!"—a shout that rang from end to end of France. Had there been but one Calisto, he easily could have been disposed of. But there were men like him everywhere, who in the name of God and the King robbed and murdered and destroyed. In

the North, under the leadership of Ribot, they were called Chauffeurs—because every Republican who fell into their hands was burned over a slow fire, as in the time of the Inquisition. In Central France, Moneuse led the ravagers of the Maine and Loire. In the South, Trestaillon was the chief leader of these infamous battalions. Better were the days of the Red Terror, when —though the wheat perished also—the tares were uprooted. The tribunals of the Revolution were no more. In their place was ungoverned crime!

You may go up to the frontiers, brave Reds of the South, to die for France and for Liberty—but while you are defending the flag of your country against the foe in front, you are powerless against the foe in your rear. While you fight your glorious battles the Whites are murdering your old father and your old mother and are ravishing your sister. If by chance you do not leave your bones on the battle-field, death awaits you at the hands of the Whites when you come back to your own homes. On the frontier the flag of the Revolution still waves defiantly—the tri-colour that has struck terror into the breasts of tyrants and that has dazzled the world. But in the heart of France floats the horrible white flag dotted with fleurs-de-lys—a ghastly shroud ready to enwrap Justice and Liberty and Honour! In the heart of France White Terror reigns!

To Calisto the turn in the tide was welcome that enabled him to end his sans-culotte masquer-

ading and to be a fine gentleman once more. With his garments of silk he assumed the title that thenceforward he was determined to bear. A clever shuffling of words permitted him to make an essay in nobility that asserted this title without committing him to it. Changing the Provençal Calisto into the French Caliste, and abbreviating the French, he began to sign his name "Cte. de la Vernède." It went very well —in those days when many a Bastian clipped his name into "baron," and many a Marius became a "Marquis"!

But his aspiration to nobility was a matter of the daytime. Other matters engaged his attention at night. That time of anarchy was a good time for turning a dishonest penny, and it also was a good time for paying off old scores. Calisto was not the man to let chances in either of these directions slip away; and, also, he was burning with a passionate eagerness to get his grip upon Adeline before that season of lawlessness should be ended and she should be safe against him under the protection of re-established law. To help him to search for her, and to seize her when she was found, and to help him in his revenges and his robberies, his company of cutthroats was of prime use to him. It was made up of men whom he had selected carefully. So long as there was profit in his service he knew that he could trust them to serve him faithfully —and to do him an unpaid villainous service now and then from sheer goodwill. Avignon was the best centre for his search for Adeline and also for his other operations, and therefore to Avignon he came—establishing himself in the

house in the Rue du Limas where dwelt Canon Jusserand, who also had whipped off his red cap in a hurry and was wearing his black frock again. There his men came to him by night—masked or with blackened faces, heavily armed—and thence he sallied forth to his searches or to his robberies or to work his revenge. His score against Jean Caritous was the first that he settled—and the story of how he settled it exhibits a fair sample of what he and others like him were doing in those times.

Calisto's men could fight when fighting was necessary, but they preferred that the odds should be on their side. Therefore they watched and waited until the departure of Father Caritous and his other sons with a wagon train for Marseilles left Jean and his mother in their home alone. That gave them even more fighting than they wanted, but at least they were sure how the matter would end. And so, in the blackness of night, they came bravely to Jean's door.

The hour was not late, and Calisto knocked at the door as a neighbour would have knocked—a friendly and not too vigorous knock, yet a knock that had in it insistence. The little loubet, asleep on guard under the cart, smelt villainy and in an instant was awake and was barking furiously. Jean, just finishing his supper, would have opened to such a knock without hesitation; but the barking of the loubet, in whose judgment he reposed a deserved confidence, made him waver a little. He went to the door slowly, and asked "Who is there?" before he made any motion to take down the bars.

The answer came instantly: "Vauclair's friend, Sergeant Bérigot. Vauclair's wife is in trouble and it is on her account that I am here."

But as Caritous did not recognise the voice, and as the loubet was growling angrily, he still did not take down the bars.

"Don't you remember me?" continued the man outside. "It was I who sent Vauclair to you to arrange about bringing his wife down from Paris. If you still are his friend, and hers, open to me. They need your help again." Then Caritous, hesitating no longer, took down the bars and opened the door.

In an instant two men had seized him, while a third clapped a handful of tow over his mouth as he cried out for help. In another instant he was bound as well as gagged. A kick from one of the men got rid of the poor little dog—breaking his ribs, and sending him to gasp out his faithful little life in a corner of the court. Then the door was closed and barred again, and four of the ruffians lifted Caritous and carried him into his own house. With a shriek of terror Mother Caritous greeted the incoming of this masked and armed company, bearing her son bound. Then her distaff fell from her hand and she fainted away.

Without paying the slightest attention to Mother Caritous, the men seated Jean on a chair in front of the cheerfully blazing fire and removed the gag—as Calisto held a pistol to his head and said: "Republican dog! It was you who brought from Paris the wife and the child of that other Republican dog, Vauclair; and with them the Comtessine d'Ambrun!"

"Yes, I did," Jean answered, trying to peer over the barrel of the pistol to see what had become of his mother. "And I did well!"

"For that alone you deserve death, but you committed still another crime: you carried them away from Avignon and helped them to find a hiding-place in the village of Malemort."

"Yes, I did," Jean repeated, "and in that also I did well."

"You served the Republic, brigand that you are!"

"I did my duty."

"You committed treason against the King!"

"The King himself was a traitor!"

"Well, never mind that. If you will tell me where Lazuli and Adeline are to be found I will give you your life."

"I couldn't tell you if I wanted to. I don't know. I wouldn't tell you if I did!"

"Why?"

"Because you are a murderer, and I don't betray my friends to murderers."

"You do not know who I am."

"Yes, I know you through your mask. You are Calisto des Sablées, the bastard of Canon Jusserand. You murdered your master, the Comte de la Vernède, and you stole his estate."

"Scoundrel! Do you dare, you who in a moment will die, to speak such words to me!"

"The truth is worse for you than a pistol-shot or a knife thrust. It is I who am killing you."

"That is enough. Tell me where Lazuli and Adeline are hidden. Refuse to tell me, and you and your mother shall burn together here in your own house!"

"Shoot me, burn me, do what you like with me, but do not hurt my mother. Surely you would not hurt my mother? But, to be sure, you never had one. You don't know what a mother is!"

"Stop your jabber and tell us what we want to know," broke in one of the masked men. "Speak up, and in a hurry. We can't fool away a whole night on you."

Caritous was startled by the man's voice. Speaking to Calisto he said: "Would you like to make a good bargain with me?"

"What is your bargain?"

"It is this: If you will promise to let my mother alone I will tell you where you can find a big treasure. After that you may kill me as soon as you please."

"Yes, I will make that bargain. Speak."

"You promise that you will not hurt my mother?"

"Yes, I promise."

"Well, that man who has just spoken, who is in such a hurry to see me dead, is a robber like yourself. His name is Bastian. He has stolen a lot of treasure from the churches. It is hidden——"

But Bastian threw himself on the bound and helpless man and seized him by the throat. "I'll tear your lying tongue out!" he shouted. And added, to the others: "I would not give him my daughter Genevieve in marriage, and this is how he is trying to revenge himself on me. He is telling rotten lies," and he thrust back the gag into Jean's mouth. Then, that he might torture the son through the mother, he dragged Mother

Caritous from where she had fallen to toast her before the fire. With an oath, half of anger and half of fear, he loosed his hold upon her and she fell heavily to the floor. He was balked of his cruelty. Fright and shock had done their work. She was dead. Her son had no time in which to mourn her. Furious that he refused to give up his secret, Calisto seized an axe and with a single blow split open Jean's head.

Then the pillage began, the best of it being ten bags of crowns which they found hidden under a heap of rubbish beneath the stair. They divided the money hurriedly, and then heaped the furniture in the centre of the room, above the bodies, and fired it. With a shout of "Vive le roi!" they were off into the blackness of the night.

The next day the charred bodies of Jean and his mother were taken from the ruins of that hospitable home. In the smouldering stable was a shapeless mass that once had been the famous white-footed horse. In the court-yard was the little dead dog.

To preserve appearances, the Procureur de la Justice went through the form of an official inquiry—but nothing came of it. The neighbours were careful not to tell that they had heard the furious barking of the dog, that they had heard unusual noises in the house; and most of all were they careful not to tell that they had heard a shout of "Vive le roi!" They were wise in their generation, the neighbours. They had heads of their own which might be split open, and houses of their own which might be burned!

CHAPTER XXVI

THE COMPANIONS OF JEHU

WHILE the Procureur de la Justice made his abortive inquiry, Calisto promenaded the Place de l'Horloge dressed in his suit of silk and elegantly twirling his gold-headed cane. His henchmen, less elegant, made merry with their loot of silver crowns. They found the proceedings of the Procureur vastly amusing—and they continued their robbings and their killings with a good heart.

But Calisto was too much an amateur of such sport not to have a hand in the larger killings which were going on in the South in those days, and too kindly in his nature not to give his men the pleasure of hearing about them when he returned from his jaunts. Moreover—his men being of the opinion that killing without robbery, save in isolated cases, was a waste of time—Calisto, who was a patriot, wished to enforce upon them his own statesmanlike conviction that the killing off of the King's enemies presently would bring the King to his own again: and so there was a moral to the stories which he told.

"You think that there is no sense in a killing that isn't paid for," he said. "Now listen to what I am going to tell you, and you will see

that you are wrong. Last week, down at Marseilles, I was present at the great executions which took place in Fort Saint Nicholas and Fort Saint Jean. Well, of the one hundred and thirty wretches whose account was settled, no less than eighty were men who had belonged to the infamous Marseilles Battalion—those execrable Reds of the Midi who went up to Paris to besiege the King's castle and who murdered the brave Swiss defenders of our King! Yes, eighty of those brigands perished! Now wasn't that magnificent? Wasn't that the justice of God? It is true that there was no money in it, but there was something almost as good as money—for those monsters were more to be feared than wolves in a fold. Though they were fettered and shut up in the dungeons of the fort, and though we were armed, we had to lay a regular siege to them; and they fought like the brigands that they were. Why, one of them—a one-armed and one-eyed fellow named Margan—managed to snatch an axe from one of our people and went to work with it like a fiend incarnate. He got his back against the wall and cut and slashed with his axe at such a rate that we only got the better of him by pinning him through at long range with our bayonets. And even then, dying on our bayonets and with his blood spurting out in streams, he defied us by crying 'Vive la République!' Now, I put it to you, wasn't it worth while to kill off a hound like that just for the good of the cause and without pay?

"Coming back from Marseilles I had a hand in another game of the same sort in Tarascon. Shut

up there in King René's Castle were thirty more of the brigands—not members of that infamous Red Battalion, to be sure, but almost as bad. Some of them belonged in Tarascon, the rest came from Graveson and Barbentane and the other roundabout towns. Of course it was absurd to keep alive in a comfortable prison a parcel of scoundrels who ought to be dead and broiling in hell. Some honest friends of mine were quite agreed with me as to what ought to be done, and we set to work and did it—posting a proclamation that the prisoners had mutinied and were about to break out from the Castle, and ending it with a call to the loyal Whites of Tarascon to crush the mutineers. In no time we had half a hundred brave fellows together, all belonging to the Companions of Jehu or to the Companions of the Sun. That was as many as we wanted, and away we went to the Castle. It was between nine and ten at night, and the full moon gave us almost the light of day.

"We knocked at the Castle gate, and when the keepers opened to us we clapped pistols to their heads and shut them fast in an out-of-the-way room in their own jail. Then there was nobody to bother us, and we went at our work comfortably. The brigands were in the two towers overlooking the Rhône, twelve in one tower and eighteen in the other. We got rid of the twelve easily and quickly. They were asleep on a heap of straw. We went in quietly, and before they knew what had happened we had finished them with bayonets and iron bars. Then we carried them, dead or wounded, to

the top of the tower and pitched them over the battlements into the Rhône.

"In the other tower, though, it was another song. The groans and the cries of some of the fellows we were carrying up the stair, and the splashing they made as they struck the water, had waked up the eighteen rascals and had put them on their guard. They twisted the legs off a big table that they had in their room and so armed themselves with clubs, and with the rest of the table they barricaded the door. Then they sung out to us that if we wanted a fight to come on. But we weren't going to risk our skins unless we had to, and we tried a trick on them. The Procureur was with us, and as some of them were likely to know his voice we made him talk.

"'It is I, the Procureur du Roi,' he called through the key-hole. 'I am here to let you out of prison and to send you to your homes. Why have you barricaded the door? Open it, and you shall go free.'

"'Yes,' a brigand inside answered, 'we shall go free as our brothers have gone—into the Rhône!'

"'It is precisely to save you from that fate that I, the Procureur du Roi, am here. Open to me. I have come to set you free.'

"'You lie, and you know you lie!' answered the brigand. 'I know you!'

"'And I know you. You are Lieutard of Graveson. You sent your two sons off to fight in the army of the Republic. You deserve death, for you are a traitor to your King!'

"'If I deserve death, come and kill me!'

shouted the insolent brute—and then all of the insolent brutes together set to yelling 'Vive la République!' till they drove us almost wild.

"After that, since they knew what we wanted, there was no use in mincing matters; so we got up axes and tried to smash in the door. But the door was lined with iron and we couldn't smash it in. Our men were furious. 'Death to the brigands!' they shouted, while the brigands answered us with 'Death to the Tyrant!' And for a while we yelled at each other through the door that they wouldn't open and that we couldn't break in.

"Then one of our men, a mason, had a good idea. 'From the floor above,' he said, 'we can take out the keystone of the vault of this room. Then we can throw down burning tow and fire the straw that serves them for a bed—and so smoke them out, as you smoke a fox out of his hole!'

"Up the stair we all scrambled with a shout; and there we found, by a miracle of God, that the keystone was loose and could be lifted out from its setting—having been arranged that way of old, so that the prisoners in that chamber could be spied upon from above. Then we had indeed the upper hand; and when the brigands saw us looking down at them through the hole they changed their tune and went to singing small. They promised to open to us provided we would spare their lives; and we, ready to promise anything, told them that their lives should be spared provided they would come out one by one, stark naked, and with nothing in their hands. And to that they agreed.

[illegible] again, and [illegible] the first man. We [illegible] to encourage the others. [illegible] grab him and [illegible] the roof of the tower. [illegible] we didn't keep him for [illegible] heart we forced him [illegible] —then in went the knife. [illegible] took the taste for bread out of [illegible] the battlements he went into the [illegible] And so it went with them—up the [illegible] over the battlements—until the room below was bare.

We hadn't kept careful count of them, as we should have done, but to some of us it seemed that we'd only polished off seventeen; and while we were talking about it the Procureur said that he was sure that we had missed Lieutard the worst villain of them all. 'I can't be mistaken,' said the Procureur. 'That brigand of a Lieutard looks like nobody but himself. I'd know him anywhere by his big black beard.'

"'Well,' said I, 'it's easy enough to settle the matter. They all came out naked. We can count their shirts. If there are eighteen shirts we'll know for sure that we've finished the eighteen men.'

"'Monsieur le Comte is right,' said the Procureur, and down we went and counted the [illegible] There were eighteen of them; and so [illegible] the Procureur was not quite satisfied [illegible]

[illegible] we were turning the corner [illegible] the church of St. M[illegible] [illegible]

ing 'Vive la République!' and as we looked up in a hurry we saw a big black-bearded naked man standing on the battlements of the tower. The next instant he went flashing down through the moonlight and shot with a great splash into the Rhône! Back we hurried to the river bank, and in a moment we saw him swimming away strongly toward the Beaucaire shore. Those of us who had guns cracked away at him; but we could not make him out well in the broken water, and the rush and the swirl of the river swung him about at such a rate that he was not a good mark. After awhile, though, we lost sight of him; and were sure that one of our balls had hit him and had done for him. We waited awhile, listening; but we heard only the gurgling murmur of the little whirlpools—as they boiled up and broke in that strong current hurrying on to the sea. At last we turned away—and just then what did we hear but 'Long live the Republic! Death to the Tyrant!' coming in a faint shout from the Beaucaire shore! The next day we went back to the Castle and found out how he had managed to get away from us. Then, in broad daylight, we could see that there was a lot of fresh soot and broken scraps of mortar in the fireplace. What he had done was to strip himself, and then wriggle up the chimney to the roof of the tower. And so," said Calisto in moralizing conclusion, "that time the devil took care of his own!"

"And is that infamous brigand still alive?" asked Lou Pounchu, one of the worst of Calisto's ruffians. "If he is, let us find him and kill him then once!"

"He is alive," Calisto answered; "I will be dead before another daybreak. lead you to him to-night—and you will what to do when you have him in your l We will kill him for the good of the c there will be no chance in his case for ro But you shall not come back empty-h When we have finished with him we wil in upon our friend Bastian and ask hin friendly way to give us a share of his swa the churches. He has not behaved tow as a good comrade should behave. Since tous told us about his treasure we have n eyes on him For him to forsake our cor in this fashion is as uncivil as his fail divide with us is unfair. To-night, then, are agreed, we will pay him a friendly cal doubt we can induce him to apologize to a practical way!"

"No doubt we can!" said Lou Po grimly. And he and the others fingered knives.

CHAPTER XXVII

A DARK NIGHT'S WORK

CALISTO did not know where the patriot Lieutard was hidden, and he did not intend to take his men in search of him. But he did mean to take them to a killing, and he had told his story with the deliberate purpose of inflaming their minds. There still was one man in Avignon who he believed might be able to tell him where Lazuli and Adeline were hidden, and that was Vauclair's friend Sergeant Bérigot. It was to Sergeant Bérigot's house that his men were to be led.

When they came together at the house of Canon Jusserand, after nightfall, Calisto had doffed his fine clothes and was dressed, as were the others, coarsely. Each man wore on the breast of his carmagnole—his rough woollen jacket—a red cross; and on his hat a red fleur-de-lys. All of them were armed with knives and pistols. When they had put on masks, or had blackened their faces, they were ready to start.

Calisto led them to the Rue du Pont Troué and halted them before a sorry little house of which the door stood ajar—as is the custom with the houses of the very poor. There was a light in an upper window, and from the room where the

light was came the ron-ron of a winder, and the quick click-clack of a silk-weaver's loom. With these sounds came also the fretful whimperings of a sleepy child, and the soft melody of a lullaby:

Baby's *so* sleepy!
Baby wants Sleep!
Why won't Sleep come to him?
Come, naughty Sleep!

"Here we are," said Calisto. "Follow me softly," and he pushed the door open gently and crept up the stair with his men at his heels. In spite of their caution, their groping hands and stumbling feet gave the alarm. The sound of the loom and of the winder stopped. So did the lullaby. As Calisto felt in the dark for the door-latch a man's voice cried out sharply: "Who's there?"

Calisto had found the latch. He flung the door open, and crying "Yield to the King's justice!" tried to rush into the room. But the little room was crowded so full by the loom and the winder and the cradle that there barely was space to squeeze into it past the partly opened door. His men could not follow him. Being inside, he could not get around the loom to Sergeant Bérigot without shutting the door again and so cutting himself off from his support. He drew his pistol and levelled it at the Sergeant—whose wife had flung herself, screaming, upon the cradle to protect the child.

Sergeant Bérigot, who had not served in the National Guard for nothing, kept his wits about him. As Calisto raised the pistol he blew out the light. Taking the chances, Calisto fired in

the dark. There was a sound of scuffling on the floor that made him believe that he had hit his man. But he had not. Bérigot had dropped to the floor and was crawling under the loom. The next instant Calisto's legs were jerked from under him, and in an instant more Bérigot had squeezed him through the doorway and had flung him down stairs on the heads of his own men. Then worse happened. In the pitch darkness his men thought that they had got hold of the escaping Sergeant. "I've got him!" cried Lou Pounchu, and he settled his fingers into Calisto's throat in what was meant to be a death-grip.

Sergeant Bérigot himself undeceived them. With his weaver's bar he hammered away from the top of the stair, breaking so many heads that the cowards—not venturing in that black pocket to use their pistols, for fear of hitting each other—fairly took to their heels. Down they came with a rush, trampling on Calisto, and down came Bérigot, brandishing his bar, after them. He too trampled on Calisto, and fancied that he had been lucky enough to kill one of his assailants. He did not stop to make investigations. On he went after the others, and fairly chased them to the end of the street. Then, very short of wind, he came back to have a look at the dead man on his stair.

But, alas, it was no dead man! Calisto was badly bruised, but he was very much alive. He was just leaving the house when he heard the sound of Bérigot's returning footsteps. Drawing his other pistol, he hid himself behind the door. And God was not watching! God was not there!

Bérigot entered the house, stepping gingerly in the darkness because of the dead body that he thought was lying there. "Don't be frightened, dearie," he called to his wife. "I've driven off the Royalist murderers. We're safe now." And he began to ascend the stair.

And then, behind him, a voice shouted: "Brigand! Long live the King!" For the second time a pistol shot shook the little house, and this time it was a shot that killed. The ball struck Bérigot between the shoulders. He fell forward on his own stair, dead.

Having made sure in the darkness that his work was accomplished, Calisto left the house and slowly and painfully made his way toward the Rue du Limas. Presently he met his men—grown braver when Bérigot's back was turned on them—coming back to look for him. It gave them sincere pleasure to learn that Bérigot was dead. Their heads were aching from the hammering that he had given them with his devil of a weaver's bar.

"And now," said Rocofort—a Rhône porter who had given up porterage for robbery—"we'll pay our visit to friend Bastian."

"Yes," said Lou Pounchu. "We'll go to him really as friends and ask him to divide. And he'd better meet us as friends and make a fair division—if he don't, he'll have to cut his stick like the others, and we'll take the whole!"

Just then there was a noise that made them all shiver. It sounded like the roll of a drum; and the music of drums—with which patrols were apt to be associated—was not pleasant in their ears. It drew nearer steadily, and though

it sounded less and less drum-like, it was a noise that they could not account for and that thrilled them with a lively fear. As it came quite close, they squeezed themselves into a deep doorway; and so waited until the danger, whatever it was, should pass. They were a little ashamed of themselves when there came around the corner a man wheeling a rumbling wheel-barrow. But in another moment, forgetting their fears and remembering their business duties, they had lined up across the street and Lou Pounchu called sharply: "Halt! Long live the King!"

"Long live the King!" answered the man with the wheel-barrow.

All of them recognised the voice. "Why!" exclaimed Rocofort, "it is our good friend Bastian! And what in the world are you wheeling around in your wheel-barrow at this time of night, Bastian? Is it your church treasure that you have here under the manure?"

"Yes," Bastian answered, perceiving that he was caught and must make the best of it. "I was taking it off to hide it in a fresh place, where I was going to bring you to divide it with me. But since we've happened to meet, this way, we might just as well divide it now." In truth, Bastian was in a hurry to make the division and so get rid of them. If he could satisfy them with this small part of his treasure, the rest would be safe.

In a moment they all were crowded close about the wheel-barrow, the covering of manure was scratched away, and each snatched up the biggest piece of silver that he could lay hands

on. "Stop, comrades, stop!" said Calisto. "We must divide evenly. This is a game at which we must play fair." And then, turning to Bastian, he added: "You know just what you've got here, Bastian. Sort it out into six parcels of about equal value. Then we'll settle the ownership of each by drawing lots."

"Into *six* parcels?" Bastian grumbled. "Don't you mean me to have a share of what is all my own?"

"Yes, that's only fair," said the others. "Bastian ought to have a share of his own swag."

The finest piece of the treasure was a magnificent monstrance—a great golden sun richly studded with precious stones. By common consent, this was set aside as the share of "Monsieur le Comte." What remained—the pyxes and chalices and salvers and basins and ewers—was sorted out by Bastian into six little heaps, ranged in a row on the cobble stones of the street and showing dimly as here and there the polished silver caught the reflection of the stars. Then Lou Pounchu turned his back on the heaps, and Rocofort pointed to one of them and asked: "Whose is this one?"

"Mine!" Lou Pounchu answered promptly, and there was a little laugh at his eagerness to make sure of his own. The remaining five were disposed of in the same fashion, and then, by way of a joke, Rocofort pointed to Lou Pounchu's knife, that had dropped beside the wheelbarrow, and asked: "To whom does this belong?" Puzzled by the question, Lou Pounchu turned around to see at what Rocofort pointed.

"Oh," he answered, entering into the joke, "that belongs to the Republic. She shall have it in her heart!"

They separated, each with his share of the spoil; and Calisto slowly and painfully—for his bones were aching and his monstrance was a heavy load—made his way to the house of the Canon Jusserand. Although the hour was late the Canon had not gone to bed. Hearing Calisto unlocking the door and locking it again, he came shuffling out in his slippers to meet him—and stopped in astonishment when he saw by the light of the lamp in the passage what Calisto bore in his arms. With a seemly reverence he bent his knees before the monstrance and very devoutly made the sign of the cross. As he arose he asked in wonder: "How did that holy treasure come into your hands?"

"By the will of God," Calisto answered, with an admirable reverence of tone and a comprehensive disregard of fact. "I was searching, as I am always searching, for the Comtessine—and in the house of a Republican brigand I found this sacred vessel. As it was more fit that I should have it than he, I brought it away. The wretch had it hidden in a pile of dung!"

"Sacrilege!" exclaimed the Canon, raising his eyes to heaven. And then, lowering his eyes, he asked: "And the Comtessine? Did you get news of her?"

"No, none," Calisto answered in a melancholy tone. "I am satisfied that she cannot be in Avignon. She still must be hidden somewhere in the mountains, among the wolves."

"She is not hidden in the mountains," said

the Canon, speaking slowly and earnestly. "She is here in Avignon. I saw her, I spoke with her, this very day!"

Calisto sprang to his feet. "Impossible!" he cried.

"No, it is not impossible. What I tell you is true. She is in the Convent of Saint Ursula. To-morrow you shall see her for yourself. I will take you with me there to serve the mass."

Canon Jusserand arose from his seat, knelt again before the monstrance and crossed himself; and then, without another word, shuffled off to bed!

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SERPENT AND THE WREN

CALISTO's delight was so great that it quite confounded him. In a maze he listened to the lessening sound of the Canon's shuffling steps. When he heard them no longer he half fancied that he must be dreaming, and pinched himself and rubbed his eyes. Could it be possible, he asked himself, that Adeline really was found? That she was there in Avignon, close to him? That on the coming morning he would see her, perhaps speak to her? That presently he would bring her away from her convent, and would carry her as his bride to the Château de la Vernède? His mind was in a whirl!

As he grew calmer, and realized that his happiness was founded in very truth, thoughts of his glad future went softly through his mind. Ah, he would be so good to her, so gentle with her! He had had enough of his robber and murderer life. Peace and tranquility in the companionship of that innocent and beautiful young girl would be welcome to him! Thenceforward his life should be that of a worthy citizen and an honourable nobleman. He had promised to join the Royalist army that had proclaimed the King at Carpentras, that was ravaging all the region thereabouts and spilling

the blood of the Reds in streams. Well, that promise should be cancelled. Others should punish the Reds for their treason. His part in the new order of things should be worthily to maintain the traditions of the nobility upon his own estates. And all was such plain sailing before him. Adeline was safe in a convent, clear away from the malignant influence of the Vauclairs; he had her mother's written command that she should marry him; if she ventured to resist that command he had Canon Jusserand, her confessor, to tell her that it was the will of Heaven that she should obey. His position was impregnable. What he wanted he surely would have. Ah, life was opening fairly to him at last!

Tired out by the galloping of these thoughts through his brain, and sore and weary from his night's work, he went to his bed. But sleep would not come to him. In the darkness his bright hopes left him and in their place came black memories of his crimes: the murder of Bérigot that very night; of the prisoners in Marseilles and Tarascon the week before; of six peasants at Caromb, whom he had forced to dig their own graves and then had caused to be shot while their wives and children stood close by; of old Bernus de Mazan—so old, over ninety years, that he had been carried forth from his home in his big arm-chair. His own son, a priest, had been forced to confess and to absolve him, and then to stand by while Calisto thrust a knife into the old man's heart. And so, from crime to crime, his memory went back to the first of all: when he murdered his kind old

aster, the Comte de la Vernède. There in
e darkness he felt again the hot blood spurt-
into his face from the three deep stabs that
gave to the man who had been a father to
. No water ever could wash away the taint
that blood—and because he was tainted by
he thought with a shivering groan, never
uld the Comtessine consent to lay her pure
d in his.

That dismal conviction changed the current
his thoughts and sent him off into a frenzy of
e against the Vauclairs—by whom, as he be-
ed, Adeline had been told of his crime.
etting his intended reformation, he was
with a fierce desire to murder all three of
—the father, the mother, the brat of a
With them well out of the way he be-
that he could convince Adeline, Canon
and helping him, that all which they had
r about him was a parcel of lies. "And
he said to himself, "everything would
with me. I would prove to her that I
her mother's friend and confidant; I
ow her that I was unselfish by restor-
her château and her estates; I would
r to believe in my virtue by my good
as a citizen and by my charity to the
could not but respect me, and then
; in the end, surely, she would give
ood e!"

s beginning to break. Out in the
captains of the Rhône boats were
to the near-by wharves, shouting morn-
tings to each other. Calisto gave over
empt to sleep and got up—moving stiffly

because of his bruised body, but very ligh
heart. He had business to transact before go
with the Canon to serve the mass in the C
vent of Saint Ursula—a message to send of
inform Lou Pounchu that he would not go
that night with the Verdets. This was on
the larger robber companies. It took its n
from the green ribbon worn on the arm of e
of its members, and its usual field of action
Lower Provence. By preference, it preyed u
Reds and Moderates; but its members were
rigorously bound by the ties of politics and
broad-minded way robbed wherever mo
was to be found.

Calisto's decision not to go out with
Verdets was based in part in his newly-fo
intention to lead the life of a reputable ci
But for some little time he had been dr
toward that same intention for reasons of
sort. With each passing month a certai
eral Bonaparte was becoming more and
a power in the affairs of France, and
would use his power in the intere
Royalists seemed to be utterly in
There even were whispers that he
his power for himself alone; that he
set the Directory and make himself
France. That he could do this if he
do it, the keen-sighted Calisto did
Already Bonaparte had done a grea
had taken Avignon back from the
he had wrenched Toulon from the
and the English; he had routed five
armies and one Piedmontese army,
compelled the rulers of Sardinia and

ıd Tuscany and Austria and the Pope himself
sue for peace; he had set up beyond the Alps
new Republic. Such a devil of a man as that
bviously could do anything. Therefore it was
ɔt all for love that Calisto was disposed to put
ı the garments of good citizenship. That was
neutral garb. Being clad in it, he could await
: outcome of events in safety. If the King
ıme to his own again, well and good. In
ıat case Calisto would be the stanchest of
.oyalists, and would claim Royal protection in
lding his title and his estates. If this man
ɔnaparte came to the front, then Calisto would
the stanchest of the supporters of what-
'er form of government happened to be
up—and would claim protection in his
ıtes certainly, and in his title if titles sur-
:d.

Monsieur le Comte de la Vernède was far
ı being singular in holding fast to this highly
:ical patriotism. And as we look through
ıce to-day we see ample proof that his policy
a policy that paid. Many a titled gentle-
who now wears the fleur-de-lys got his
and his estate to support it, from a grand-
· who stole them both. The points may
ged that these Royalist grandsons of thieves
-day the supporters of religion and of order;
under any circumstances, that they are not
nsible for their grandfathers' crimes. And
ese points the answer may be made that
ɔ blood of these respectable rich men is the
. of crime ready to germinate. While their
es stay by them they well may be honest.
: let poverty come to pinch them and we need

not doubt that off they will go, every one of them, to their old trade!

But no such moral reflections as these troubled Calisto on that morning which followed the night of Sergeant Bérigot's murder. His face was set forward, and the murder of poor Bérigot was a thing already of the past. Light of heart, he sent off the servant with his message to Lou Pounchu; and then set himself to dressing in his finest suit of silk, to making his person elegant with powder and pomade, that he might be ready betimes to go with Canon Jusserand to serve the mass. The thought of the happiness so soon to come to him thrilled him with delight. Already he felt Adeline's hand in his as he led her over the threshold of the Château de la Vernède in the forest of Aramon. There she would be his very own; there this lily of virtue would hide the dung-heap of his crimes! He was impatient to be off to the convent. He chafed at each moment of delay.

But Monsieur le Chanoine Jusserand was sleeping like a saint! He had no reason for rising especially early that morning, and he slumbered on as slumbers one whose conscience is at ease. In point of fact, it was at ease. That fanatic for King and Pope was satisfied with his own doings. Acting in perfect good faith, when the Pope's Legate ruled in Avignon, he had presided over the tribunal which condemned poor wretches to have their tongues pierced with red-hot irons, and then to pass on to the galleys, for the sin of taking God's name in vain; which condemned the father of a family to the

strapado or the rack for the crime of walking the streets at night without a lantern. In the same good faith, when the Royalist order came from Coblenz, he had put on the red cap and had helped Maignet—that wolf of the Terror—to guillotine moderate Republicans and those who were lukewarm for the Pope. Heaven and the Pope himself approved of every means which would restore the country to the King and the Church to its rights again; therefore he felt that he was doing his duty in furthering excesses of cruelty which would hasten reaction in favour of his temporal and spiritual lords. And the men of the Terror were so blind that they suffered this game to be played! They suffered a priest who had spit at the banner of the Rights of Man to disguise himself in a red cap and to make tools of them to send the reddest of Reds to the guillotine!

It was a game that was played not alone in Avignon. By a priest, Jourdan Chop-head was denounced as an Aristocrat and brought to the scaffold. Jourdan Chop-head an Aristocrat! He who got his name because it was believed that he had cut off the head of the Governor of the Bastille; who led the peasants to the sacking of the monks' granaries in Avignon; who was charged with the massacre of the sixty-three Aristocrats shut up in the tower of La Glacière! But the priest who compassed Jourdan's death acted, according to his lights, in good faith and did not consciously commit a sin.

It was the men of the Convention who sinned. Blindly they gave themselves as tools

to fanatical priests—the Grégoires, the Jusserands, the Sieyés—who gained their ends by professing a creed which they hated; who remained always the venomous nettles of the Inquisition that they always had been! The men of the Revolution, too blind to see the trick that was put upon them, perished with the Revolution. The grave that they dug for the Tyrant was their own grave also; the banner of the Rights of Man which they had raised was their dazzling shroud. They died, but the banner which was their shroud did not rot with them. It has survived, glorious and imperishable—being woven with a warp of Reason and a woof of Justice, as were the Commandments given on Mount Sinai amidst lightning and thunder by the hand of God.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE DEVIL SERVES THE MASS

At daybreak, when the shuttles of the early-rising silk-weavers began to clatter in their looms, Canon Jusserand awoke from his saintly slumber, crossed himself, joined his hands meetly, and devoutly recited his angelus. While he dressed he mumbled prayers to all the saints in Paradise: for the peace of his own soul, for the well-being of his holy father the Pope, for the speedy uplifting to power of Louis XVII, his king. Being dressed, he knelt before his ivory crucifix and implored most holy Christ to aid the army of the outland allies of the Royalists to conquer the army of the Republic; to sound, if need be, the trumpet of the Last Judgment to scatter the Republican battalions—as the chaff of the threshing-floors is scattered by the blast of the mistral. Then, rising from his knees and again crossing himself, he kissed his scapulary and his medals and went forth from his room.

In the passage outside he found Calisto impatiently awaiting him. "Oh," said the Canon, in a tone of surprise, "are you up already? Well, well, I understand. Your brain is quite turned by the thought of seeing the little Comtessine!"

"And well it may be," Calisto answered. "This is an eventful day for me. I swore to her mother that I would take the Comtessine to myself and that I would guard and cherish her. That promise begins to be fulfilled to-day."

"Let us now go to the convent," said the Canon. "And thank God that you have found her at last."

As they left the house they covered their mouths with their hands to guard against breathing freely the tainted air that rose from the foul streets and mingled with the still low-lying morning mist. They walked rapidly, and in a little while had covered the short distance between the Rue du Limas and the Rue Annanelle and were come to the Convent of St. Ursula. The Canon knocked at the garden portal, the little gate through which the lay Sisters came and went, and through which the service of the convent was carried on. It was Sister Margai, one of the lay Sisters, who opened to them—after first peeping through a grating to make sure that she was opening to their own almoner come to say the morning mass.

Sister Margai stood aside as they entered, and bowed before the Canon's hastily bestowed blessing. Calisto followed the priest, his eyes downcast, his hands slipped into his sleeves and folded upon his breast in proper ecclesiastical style. As he passed Sister Margai he bowed slightly, and his lips moved as though in prayer. Then the door was locked and bolted behind them, and in the faint light of early morning they walked along the garden path. Behind

them came Sister Margai, her gown rustling softly, her bunch of keys jingling a little, and her olive-pit rosary making a faint rattling as it swung against her knees.

As they walked up the path they heard the murmuring of voices alternating with what sounded like a sighing groan; and this, as they drew close to the convent, resolved itself in the words of the morning prayer, the Litany of the Saints. A single voice uttered the invocation:

"Santa Maria, Mater Dei!"

Then all the nuns answered together:

"Ora pro nobis!"

And then the single voice:

"Santa Maria Magdalena!"

And then the voices:

"Ora pro nobis!"

It was the recurrent "Ora pro nobis!" which had the sound of a sighing groan—a deep-drawn cry in which were blended the hoarse and quavering voices of old women and the clear sweet voices of young girls. A thrill went through Calisto's heart as he listened. It seemed to him that among those girl voices he could distinguish the voice of Adeline! But his thoughts just then were not wholly sentimental. From the moment that he had entered the garden he had been scanning closely the convent windows and the convent walls. The sound of that sweet voice only made his examination the keener. If that voice could not be his by the fair means of asking, he was resolved to make it his by the foul means of force!

With these thoughts in his mind, he was disappointed because they did not enter the

convent—as he had counted upon—but passed along at the side of it and entered the chapel by an outer door. There Sister Margai, bowing to another benediction, left them, and they went into the silent, incense-scented oratory alone. Canon Jusserand dipped the tips of his fingers into the font beside the entrance and offered the holy water to Calisto—who accepted it, on the same hand that a few hours before had murdered Sergeant Bérigot, and crossed himself with a becoming grace.

They went on into the sacristy—half kneeling as they passed before the altar—and there found the vestments for the mass duly laid out. While the priest robed himself, to a muttered accompaniment of prayers, Calisto went backward and forward between the sacristy and the sanctuary—making a show of arranging the altar, but in reality peering about him keenly with his snake-like black eyes. The darkness of the chapel disconcerted him. The only light—very faint, the sun barely being risen—came through a single high-up window, and even this light was dimmed by the richly coloured glass. Unless Adeline sat in the very front row of chairs he would not see her. He was not sure that he could see her even then. He was surprised, also, that the nuns should so delay their coming. While in the sacristy, he fancied that he heard the sound of soft footsteps and a little rattling of rosaries; but when he hurried to the sanctuary, as though to set the missals in order, the seats still were bare.

Much more to his astonishment, the seats were bare when the Canon—bearing the chalice

and the paten—motioned to him to follow and told him to ring the bell. "The church is empty," he remonstrated. But as the Canon motioned to him imperatively to do as he was bid, he picked up the bell and rang it as they entered the sanctuary. Instantly there came, seemingly from the empty nave, a bustle of little noises—chairs slightly moved, suppressed coughs, the rattle of rosaries—and then a soft murmur, as of many voices in whispered prayer. Calisto could not at all understand whence these sounds came. Nor could he turn his head to investigate into them—as he knelt, facing the altar, in the rear of Canon Jusserand, and made the responses while that worthy priest said the Introit and the Confiteor and went on with the mass. Even when he was free to rise and to look about him the puzzle continued. His eyes, searching the deep shadows of the nave, assured him that not a human being was in the church beside themselves.

So intent was he upon resolving this mystery that he forgot his duties. Suddenly he realized that the priest had finished the reading of the Epistle and was waiting for him to move the Missal before the reading of the Gospel should begin. Hurriedly he performed this office—carrying the Missal across, with the due genuflection, to the Canon's left. At the first words of the Gospel there was the sound of movement again: and then he discovered whence the sounds came.

In the side of the church was a large grating over which was drawn a black curtain—a curtain of thin fabric—through which he could dis-

cern, faintly and confusedly against dim light coming from windows in the wall beyond, the standing figures of the nuns. To distinguish individuals was impossible. Old and young, all were alike there—mere vague shades. He perceived that even were the curtain drawn it would be almost impossible for him to recognise Adeline. The faint light, coming from behind, cast the faces of all the nuns into shadow. When they knelt, their heads were bowed upon their hands. Still, rigid, they seemed less like living women than bowed statues in marble carved above a tomb.

Again he forgot his duties. When the moment for the Offertory came the priest was compelled to recall his wandering attention by a loud "Ahem!" and to signal to him vigorously, at the Elevation, that he must ring his bell. At the tinkling of the bell the Sisters prostrated themselves, and remained prostrate until that portion of the rite was ended and the Mother Superior signalled to them to rise.

The light behind the curtain had grown much brighter as the sun, rising above the house tops, shone full upon the windows beyond. The individual figures of the nuns could be distinguished plainly, and Calisto scanned them with a very eager gaze. But he only could see that some were short and some tall. Adeline might be among them, or she might not. He could not in the least be sure. He was growing rather desperate as his hope of seeing her faded away. His thoughts went back to the possibility of breaking into the convent and carrying her off by force. He was

glad to perceive, in the stronger light, that the grating in the wall of the chapel was not of iron but of wood. That tended to simplify matters. Getting into the chapel would be easy. Still easier would it be to break through that old wooden grating. And then the way into the convent would be clear!

A loud "Ahem!" from Canon Jusserand once more aroused him. The Canon was motioning to him to take the candlestick and the napkin. At the same moment there was a soft rustling, accompanied by a sudden increase of light, as the curtain covering the grating was drawn aside; and then the sound of a bolt shot back and the creaking of a rusty hinge. A little door in the centre of the grating had been opened that the nuns might receive the Sacrament. Bearing the sacred elements, the Canon went from the altar to this opening. Calisto followed him, carrying the candle and the napkin in his hands.

CHAPTER XXX

A SACRILEGIOUS SACRAMENT

THE black-veiled nuns were ranged in a line, ready to advance to the opening in the grating. At the head of the line was the Mother Superior, Sister Dorothy; then came the Sisters in order of age, the very old ones pale and wrinkled and with wax-like hands as thin and as colourless as the hands of the dead; then the lay Sisters; and last of all three young girls wearing worldly dresses and white veils. The veils of all were lifted aside, in readiness for the Sacrament. Through the jessamine-wreathed windows, opening on the garden, a flood of sunshine poured into the room. At last Calisto beheld the face that he longed so eagerly to see: one of the white-veiled young girls was Adeline!

Standing beside the priest, Calisto held up the napkin of the holy table as each of the nuns received the Sacrament. Unguided by his eyes, fixed upon Adeline, his hand moved awkwardly. His body swayed a little, and his breath came short. One by one the women knelt in front of the opening in the grating, Adeline last of all. Instinctively, as she took her place, he shrank away a little, fearful lest she should recognise him. But her eyes were downcast: she saw only the hand of the priest

extending the wafer to her above the napkin. She raised her head slightly, but not her eyes, as she opened her rosy lips to receive the angels' bread. Calisto's blood-stained hand almost was touching her beautiful white throat. A shiver went through him, and his hand so trembled—the hand which firmly had thrust a knife into his master's quivering flesh—that he let the napkin fall. He stood for a moment stupefied—his strong fingers close to that delicate throat, as though to seize it in a death-giving grasp. Having received the Sacrament, her eyes still downcast, Adeline passed on. Monsieur Jusserand went back to the altar. Calisto, bearing the candlestick, followed him automatically. Behind him he heard the creaking of the hinge and the rattle of the bolt as the door in the grating was closed; then the soft swish of the curtain as it was drawn behind the bars. When he was come to the altar, and turned to look again, all beyond the grating once more was vague and shadowy. He could see only that the nuns were prostrate—like the sheaves in a reaped field.

"Ita missa est," intoned the priest, turning toward the nave with outstretched hands.

"Deo gracias," responded the murderer.

And so the mass went on to its end. When the Canon went into the sacristy to disrobe, Calisto remained to extinguish the candles and to set in order the altar. He did this very slowly, his eyes fixed on the dimly seen figures of the nuns. As the little procession filed away, passing from the oratory back into the convent, his heart thrilled as he clearly distinguished—

against one of the brightly sunlit windows—the figure of Adeline. She was walking between the two other young girls, and her more delicately elegant form and more graceful carriage made her seem a queen attended by her maids.

Calisto, blood-stained criminal though he was, felt his soul stirred and softened as he gazed at this pure young creature whom he so deeply loved. He longed to call to her, to tell her that he gave himself to her utterly, soul and body, to do with as she pleased; to promise anything, everything, for a kindly glance from her beautiful eyes, for a kindly touch, for a kindly word. For a moment the love for her that tore his heart conquered his wild-beast instincts and made him tender and pitiful!

But it was only for a moment that this mood lasted. As Adeline disappeared into the convent the wild beast was aroused again. In the unreasoning rage of a wild beast whose prey has succeeded in escaping, he flung himself against the grating and shook it violently—mad to follow her, to seize her, to make her his own! The noise that he made recalled him to his senses. He trembled a little as he reflected how much his imprudence might have cost him. He was farther chilled by the sound of talking in the sacristy, and by the thought that whoever was in there with Canon Jusserand might have seen his crazy act. Meekly, with downcast eyes, he turned to the altar and collected the sacred vessels; and then, with the devout air of one who has just partaken of the Sacrament, carried them into the sacristy.

Canon Jusserand was in the act of taking off

his stole, which he kissed as he laid it down. Sister Margai was with him. She had brought a pewter tray on which were two cups of milk and two buttered rolls for the breakfast of the priest and his assistant. There were tears in her eyes, and she was trembling like a reed. Her agitation filled Calisto with alarm. Perhaps she had seen him beating at the bars! But in a moment he was reassured.

"They have taken him to be a conscript?" the Canon asked.

"'Yes, Monsieur," Sister Margai answered brokenly, "to be a conscript. The gendarmes came and took away our good Pierre. Oh, holy Mother of Heaven! The evil days are coming back again! And they say, Monsieur, that all the young men over sixteen are to go. Ai! Ai! Ai! Who's going to pasture our cows?" And Sister Margai sobbed aloud.

"It is to General Bonaparte that we owe this," said the Canon. "Why could he not have staid in Egypt and died there of the plague!" He sighed deeply, and crossed himself with the hand in which he held his buttered roll.

As Calisto realized that he himself was in peril if a general conscription had been ordered, a fear of a more practical sort possessed him. "Are you sure that your Pierre was taken as a conscript?" he asked. "May he not have been a deserter?"

"No, no. He was not a deserter. He never was in the army at all. Oh, he was such a nice boy. He was no more in the way than if he had been a girl!"

"Some one must have denounced him, then.

There are plenty of those Republican brigands who would be glad to get a convent servant into trouble."

"No, Monsieur, I don't think that anybody denounced him. You see, the gendarmes are searching one house after the other, and wherever they find a man—or a poor boy like our Pierre—who can serve in the army they just snatch him away. It was dreadful when they came, the gendarmes! The street was full of them, with their bayonets and their guns! Oh our poor Pierre! Oh our poor cows! What will become of them now!" Sister Margai broke forth into sobs again, and with upraised arms left the sacristy by the little door through which she had come.

Canon Jusserand and Calisto looked at each other anxiously, but they were silent until the sound of the nun's retreating footsteps had died away. Then the Canon, as he dipped his roll into his cup, said thoughtfully: "This may make trouble. It will be safer for you to remain here while I find out what the gendarmes are doing."

"But what will the Sisters say to my staying here?"

"I will arrange that. They will make no objections. Now listen. If I find that you may return to the house without danger, I will send for you. But if it is not safe for you to return, you must spend the day here, and in the evening I will have a carriage at the garden door to convey you to the Château de la Vernède. There you may be safely hidden—if necessary, under another name."

"I want no better name than the one to which I have a legal right. The title deeds which I received from my poor good master before he died give me the right to the name of the Comte de la Vernède."

"Yes, that is true enough. The title goes with the estate. But we need not bother about names and titles just now. The important matter is to make sure that you are not snapped up as a conscript, to serve in this outlaw army of the Republic against our good Austrian and German allies who are fighting for our good King. That is why it may be best for you to be off into hiding at the Château."

Calisto did not answer in words, but he shook his head doubtingly.

"Well, doesn't my plan suit you?"

"In one way it suits me very well indeed, but in another way it doesn't suit me at all. If I go off and hide myself at the Château, what becomes of my marriage with the Comtessine? Suppose that some one else wants to marry her? Suppose she leaves the convent?"

"Don't worry about that. You forget that I shall be here, and that nothing can be done without consulting me. I am the director and the confessor of the Comtessine. I shall know all that is going on."

"And then those Vauclairs! They may come back and take her to live with them again. If she gets into the hands of those brigands there isn't much hope for me! And oh, to leave her at all, to go away from her now that at last I have found her, is bitter hard!"

"What difference does your going away

make when I tell you that I hold her in my hand like a nestling? I am here to watch over her. to tell her that she is in danger of damnation if she does not obey her mother's command to marry you."

"I would rather see her dead than married to another—perhaps to some brigand Republican!"

"She shall belong to you or to no one, never fear. But hush! Here comes Sister Margai again. I hear her sobbing for her lost cow-herd and her unhappy cows." As he spoke, Sister Margai re-entered the sacristy, with upraised arms and in tears. "Well," he continued, addressing the sorrowing Sister, "what is it now? Have the gendarmes come back again?"

"No, no. They're gone, and our Pierre is gone with them. They've gone to search every house in Avignon. We are left desolate—we and the cows!"

"Never mind about the cows now, Sister. Listen, I have something to say to you. I am going out alone. Monsieur le Comte de la Vernède, my relative—who was good enough to come with me to serve the mass—will remain here for a time, possibly for the whole day. You easily will understand that he does not wish to be taken off by the gendarmes to fight for this carrion Republic against our good German and Austrian allies. Therefore he will stay here until it shall be safe for me to send for him. I leave him in your hands. Should he tire of the sacristy, you will permit him to walk in the garden. Tell the reverend Mother Superior that I have authorized this."

"What you have ordered, Father, shall be done," Sister Margai answered, bending her head that the priest might make the sign of the cross over it and crossing herself when this blessing had been conferred. And then turning to Calisto, as the Canon left them, she added: "Monsieur le Comte, I am at your commands."

"Tell me," Calisto asked, "was I mistaken in believing that Mademoiselle la Comtessine d'Ambrun was with you just now at the holy mass?"

"No, Monsieur, you were not mistaken. She was with us."

"How strange! Never did I expect to see her a nun."

"But she is not a nun, Monsieur; and she never will be one, I assure you."

"You astonish me. If she is not a nun, and is not to be one, why was she wearing a white veil?"

"It was her veil for the Holy Communion, Monsieur."

"Surely, though, she is here in the convent with the Sisters. She is one of you."

"No, Monsieur le Comte, you are mistaken. The Comtessine is with us only at the time of our services. She lives in a house in the garden that is not cloistered like the convent."

"Ah, for the moment, no doubt. But she is not likely to dwell apart from you long. She has no one left to her on earth, poor child! Presently she will join your holy Sisterhood and be at peace."

"Oh, don't you believe that, Monsieur le Comte. The Comtessine is not alone in the

world. She has——" and then, suddenly realizing that she was talking something very like gossip, Sister Margai stopped short. In confusion, she hurriedly picked up the breakfast tray and turned to go.

Calisto detained her. "Has she then any relatives left alive?" he asked. "I thought that in the dreadful days of the Terror all were lost."

After all, Sister Margai was a woman. What she had to tell was too delightful not to be told. She hurried away with the tray, but paused for an instant on the threshold as she threw these words behind her before she clapped to the door: "Mademoiselle la Comtessine is betrothed!"

CHAPTER XXXI

WITHIN CONSECRATED WALLS

SISTER MARGAI'S announcement left Calisto thunderstruck. Adeline betrothed! It seemed impossible! To whom could her troth be given? He was in a ferment. The heavy scent of incense in the chapel seemed to stifle him. He went hastily to the door opening upon the garden that he might breathe the fresh outer air.

Save for the sparrows flying about in search of their breakfasts, the sunny garden was deserted. Glancing about him shrewdly, he walked out among the roses. The restful quiet of that sweet place soothed him and he grew calmer. Presently, down at the far end of the convent, he caught sight of two unbarred windows which overlooked an adjoining garden, separated from the one in which he was by a high wall. "The home of the Comtessine is behind those unbarred windows," he said to himself—and walked softly, keeping close beside the convent, until he was come to the dividing wall.

Just then a door was opened with a bang that sent the frightened sparrows flying up to the roofs, and that for a moment alarmed Calisto also. In an instant he was at ease again, as there came from the other side of the wall the

sound of girlish laughter and gay cries and hand-clappings and running steps—and he was almost sure that among the voices he recognised that of the Comtessine. Then there was a pattering sound, as of dancing feet, and the girls' voices sang together a gay round beginning:

> Old Nick is ailing,
> He's complaining to-night.

It was the round that Adeline and old Joy and little Clairet had sung so often in the garden of the house in the Rue de Bretagne; and as Calisto heard the familiar words he was absolutely certain that she whom he was hunting with a wild beast's ardour and eagerness was within a few feet of him, on the other side of that wall. Her nearness, and her inaccessibility, made so maddening a combination that he bit his thin lips and dug his nails into the palms of his hands. For a long while he stood there, listening, in a dull rage. At last a bell rang. Then the gay sounds on the other side of the wall stopped abruptly, there was a little bustle of retreating steps, the door slammed again—and then all was still.

Slowly he returned to the sacristy of the chapel and there seated himself—his face in his hands, his elbows on his knees—to chew the cud of those bitter words: "The Comtessine is betrothed!" He was torn and pierced by a sharp pain that he could not explain to himself; that his cruel and unnatural heart did not recognise as the stinging pain of love. This bastard, who was acknowledged by no parent, who possessed no friend, felt his eyes filling with tears. He

knew not why he wept. He was ashamed of his weakness. "Can it be I, the Comte de la Vernède," he cried aloud, "who is crying like a baby because the Comtessine is betrothed to some one? What do I care for that, and what difference does it make? Now that I have found her, she is mine. I have her here, locked up in a convent, as safe as though she were locked up in a prison. She cannot escape from me. I have her fast. Betrothed? Yes, she *is* betrothed, but to me—or to Death!"

He stood erect as he spoke these words, his eyes, still wet with tears, flashing with anger—and almost fell backward as he saw standing directly in front of him, pale and motionless as a statue, the Superior of the convent, Mother Dorothy! He knew that she must have heard every syllable that his lips, giving voice to the thoughts of his black heart, had uttered. For an instant he was in utter confusion. Then he rallied—and before Mother Dorothy had time to speak he had flung himself on his knees before the great crucifix.

"Oh holy Christ," he cried, "have pity on me! I am a sinful man made mad by rage. The fire of love that burns in my veins is fire from hell. Have pity on me, my Saint Christ! I sin because I look with longing eyes upon that innocent girl, that virgin of delight, who seeks no spouse but Thee; who desires no wedding garb but the habit of sweet Saint Ursula. Forgive my sin, oh my Saint Christ, and take her to Thyself—while I, unworthy of her, shall hide away in pain in the forests of La Vernède, as a wounded wolf hides himself in his lair!"

Calisto arose from before the crucifix and knelt to the Mother Superior, saying pleadingly: "Forgive me, holy and reverend Mother! The Comte de la Vernède is at your feet—so shamed that he dares not raise his eyes to yours because in this house of virtue he has suffered to escape from him the cry of his wretched flesh! Forgive me, holy Mother. My cry of the flesh was wrung from me because I am suffering the tortures of the damned. Forgive me!"

Mother Dorothy's feeling of alarm and horror was changed to a profound pity by this appeal. "Monsieur le Comte," she said soothingly, "my heart bleeds for you in your sorrow. But do not sorrow despairingly. God is good. He is not jealous of His creatures. The Comtessine is bound as yet by no vows. Perhaps God has sent you to our convent to withdraw her from the devil's claws—for her heart also is hurt and torn."

Calisto's fears were allayed by Mother Dorothy's display of so kindly a sympathy. He listened eagerly as she continued: "Sometimes we speak to the Comtessine about becoming a nun. We urge upon her that her relatives all are dead and that she is alone in the world, that the title deeds to her estate have vanished and that she has no home."

"And what does she answer?"

"That she is betrothed."

"To whom?"

"That she does not say. But we know. It is to a peasant boy from her own estate. A lad who was with her in Paris in the awful days of the Revolution."

"Ah, the poor Comtessine!" sighed Calisto. "It is evident that she knows nothing of her dead mother's acts and commands. Before that holy woman was led away to the scaffold she confided the title deeds to Ambrun to my keeping; and to me she confided also her written command that the Comtessine, her daughter, should be my wife. It is impossible that she should be betrothed to any other than me. Before God, and by the will of her dead mother, I am her affianced husband!"

"Monsieur le Comte!" exclaimed Mother Dorothy in amazement. "It is God himself who sends you here! Your coming brings peace and happiness to our little Comtessine."

"Yes, reverend Mother; and peace and happiness will come to me also. When you found me, just now, in the rage of despair it was because I had heard from the Sister porteress what you have told me: that the Comtessine was betrothed. I feared that I had lost her, and I became as one mad. But now that I know to whom she is betrothed—a Republican brigand—and am sure of your help in saving her from such a misalliance, my fear is gone. The Comtessine——"

A rumble of wheels in the street, that stopped at the garden door of the convent, cut short his words. In that quiet quarter the sound was a most unusual one. Calisto and Mother Dorothy listened anxiously; and still more anxiously when there came a loud knocking at the door. By a common impulse they left the sacristy and went quickly to the door of the chapel

—and then their anxiety was relieved by hearing the voice of Canon Jusserand. A moment later the Canon joined them. "The carriage is here," he said to Calisto, "and you must get away at once—either to the Château de la Garde or to La Vernède."

"In broad daylight?" Calisto questioned. "Surely, with Avignon alive with gendarmes, that will be to fling myself into the wolf's jaws!"

"No, this is the very moment to escape. The gates are open, and are not kept. To-night they will be shut and guarded. Decide at once where you will go—to La Garde or to La Vernède."

"Unless I can take the Comtessine with me I will not go to either!"

"What folly! Where can the Comtessine be better off than in this cloistered convent? Where can she wait more safely for the day when I shall join you together in the sight of God?"

"How do I know that I shall find her here when the evil days are past? She may be spirited away by that brigand of a Republican to whom she says she is betrothed."

"God preserve us from that!" exclaimed Mother Dorothy. "What, a miserable peasant steal away our Comtessine! No such sacrilege as that will be permitted here, Monsieur le Comte, that I promise you!"

"Better should she die than disobey the command of her sainted mother," added Canon Jusserand.

"But if I go into hiding," persisted Calisto,

"when can we be married? Think how long I may have to wait!"

"How long does a storm last? A day," said the Canon. "How long does a plague last? A month. At the worst, that Bonaparte will not last a year. He has re-opened the churches, but his fight is not made for our good King. He fights for this carrion of a Republic," and the Canon spat upon the ground.

Calisto made no answer, but he shook his head as much as to say: "Who claims, claims. Who holds, has!".

"And, no matter what this Bonaparte does or does not do," continued the Canon, "I will see to it that you shall have what you want. One of these days, or one of these nights, I will carry the Comtessine up to the Château de la Garde—where the gendarmes are not likely to look for you, or for her either—and there I will bless your marriage, and so fulfil the wish of the sainted Marquise d'Ambrun."

"Oh happy Comtessine," exclaimed Sister Dorothy. "Thus shall she be snatched from the claws of that brigand who even now may be fighting with Bonaparte against our good King! And until that bright day comes, I shall guard her well!"

Calisto looked at Sister Dorothy with a look so piercing and a smile so evil that she shuddered in the very marrow of her bones. She seemed to hear him say: "You have promised to guard her. Woe be to you if your promise is not kept!"

Monsieur Jusserand was in boiling oil, so anxious was he to get Calisto away before he

should be snapped up for a conscript by the gendarmes. Seizing him by the arm, he half led half dragged him down the garden to the gate, and there fairly thrust him into the waiting carriage and closed the door with a bang. "Drive Monsieur le Comte to Malemort, to the Château de la Garde," he said to the coachman. "Take the road through Pernes, not through Carpentras. It is shorter and safer." And then, as the carriage drove away, he re-entered the convent garden and returned to Mother Dorothy in the sacristy of the chapel. As he walked up the garden path he drew out his snuff-box and took a big pinch of snuff slowly and comfortably. He entered the sacristy smiling a satisfied smile.

Mother Dorothy still was trembling with excitement over all these strange happenings, but she grew calmer as Monsieur Jusserand came smiling back to her—and then was startled in a different way. In his eyes was a roguish glint such as she had seen there first years and years before, when they both were young—he a young abbé and she a young nun. Curious memories thrilled her. As he continued to smile at her, still with the roguish glint in his eyes, she also smiled—but blushed a little and cast her own eyes down.

"Well," said the Canon, "what do you think of him?"

"Of whom?"

"Of that young man."

"He seems to be a very worthy and pious young man. A little too quick-tempered, perhaps."

"Didn't your heart say anything to you when you saw him?"

"I do not understand. Why should my heart say anything to me?"

Smiling still more roguishly, Canon Jusserand drew close to her and gave her a little dig with his elbow as he asked: "Didn't you notice his resemblance to somebody whom you know?"

Mother Dorothy drew away a little. "What mystery is this, Monsieur Jusserand?" she asked.

"Come, come. If you looked at him at all you must have seen that he is the very image of me, as I was twenty-three years ago."

"I do not in the least know what you are talking about, Monsieur," Mother Dorothy answered. Her voice shook a little. Her hands were clasped together tightly. Her eyes were fixed upon the floor.

"Then I will tell you. Twenty-three years ago, when that young man was a little child, he was abandoned—may God forgive us for it!—at Les Sablées, in Aramon. By a miracle, that must have been worked by our patron Saint Ursula, he was found by the Comte de la Vernède—who took him to his Château, who adopted him, who bequeathed to him his estate that carries with it a noble title. That is much for an outcast and a foundling. But now he wants more, and it is only just that we should aid him to accomplish this marriage which will give him happiness and which will make his position in life secure."

In Mother Dorothy's breast were strangely blended feelings, but the dominant feeling was

happiness. At last her mother-instinct, that for years had filled her heart with longing, had been gratified: she had seen her child! For a moment she hid her face in her hands. Then she knelt before the altar—to thank God for the joy that He had given her, and for the thousandth time to ask forgiveness for her sin.

Canon Jusserand softly left her. He was satisfied that he could count upon her helping to bring about the marriage of Calisto and the Comtessine.

CHAPTER XXXII

A MIDNIGHT CONFERENCE

It was well for Calisto that Canon Jusserand had hurried him away to the Château de la Garde. When that worthy priest returned to his home in the Rue du Limas he found the gendarmes in the act of searching it. What was more, they were led by Sergeant Vauclair —who had returned the day before from the army and who had brought them to where he believed that Calisto would be found. But beyond turning the house pretty well upside down, the search produced no result.

Disconcerted by having led the gendarmes on a wild-goose chase, Vauclair betook himself to his little house in the Place du Grand Paradis and began to put in working order his saws and planes. He was taking up his trade again; and Lazuli—come back with Clairet from Malaucène —was setting in order once more their dismantled home. Old Joy no longer was with them. The good old woman had died in Malaucène, peacefully and happily, and they had left her at rest in the little graveyard on the north slope of Mont Ventour. The people living round about the Place du Grand Paradis received them kindly—having added, as time passed on, a good deal of water to their wine.

Indeed, the Red Terror and the White Terror being ended, both Reds and Whites had quieted down amazingly. They were surprised, and they were still more pleased, by finding themselves in peace and quiet once more. And, also, the fact must be acknowledged that the victories which General Bonaparte was winning—victories so brilliant that men of all parties were dazzled by them—were making for good citizenship by creating some sort of solidarity in France. Out of these large causes came to the Vauclairs the result that they could live again peacefully among their neighbours. Vauclair had plenty of work to do, and for him and for Lazuli and for Clairet—growing to be a fine big boy—time slipped away very happily in their comfortable little home.

Meanwhile, up in the Château de la Garde, time did not slip away happily for Calisto. On the contrary, he grew desperately tired of a life in which the only excitement was his dread of the coming of the gendarmes. As the weeks lengthened out into months he became more and more restless, and his head was full of wilder and wilder plans for gaining his ends. The simplest and the most practicable of these was to get his band of ruffians together some dark night, scale the wall of the convent, and carry Adeline off by force. That would be both direct and effective. But he knew that it would be less effective, in the long run, than any plan that would make Adeline come to him willingly. Even at the cost of longer waiting, it was better that she should yield gradually to the pressure that Canon Jusserand and Mother Dorothy were

exercising upon her—and the thought occurred to him that this pressure might be greatly increased by adding to it the command of the Lord Bishop of Avignon. It would not be difficult, he decided, to enlist the services of that dignitary by a handsome gift toward the restoration of his dismantled cathedral; and a word from the Lord Bishop surely would compel Adeline to obey her mother's written command.

And so—while he meditated plans which sometimes were foul, and which sometimes in a way were fair—the time dragged on. The summer passed, the autumn passed, winter was well advanced. Still nothing happened, still he was virtually a prisoner in the lonely Château. At last he could stand inaction no longer. At any risk he decided to make a move. He would steal into Avignon by night and see for himself what could be done there. If nothing could be done, he was ready to fire the convent and burn Adeline to death, and all the nuns along with her, rather than that his maddening waiting should go on and on!

Therefore there came a knock, one wintry midnight when the mistral was blowing fiercely, at Canon Jusserand's door. The Canon, snug in his warm bed, paid no attention to it. Some dying person wanted absolution, he thought. Well, they must get a younger priest to give it. He would not risk his old body out of doors on a night like that merely because some silk-weaver had the bad taste to choose weather of that sort in which to die. And he settled his night-cap more comfortably and drew the warm covers well about his ears.

But his old servant looked at the matter differently. It would be mortal sin, she believed, if she failed in any way to help a dying man to receive absolution; and she slipped on a petticoat and a shawl and went to her window, which overlooked the street door. The mistral had set to dancing every star in heaven, and by the starlight she saw a man muffled in a cloak raising his hand once more to the knocker. "If I did not know that Monsieur le Comte is at his Château," she said to herself, "I would say that it was he for sure." And then she called down: "Who's there?"

"It is I," Calisto answered. He did not dare to speak his name. The wind was blowing hard enough to carry words, like dead leaves, all over Avignon.

The old woman recognised his voice and hurried down to let him in—calling out, as she passed the Canon's door, "It's Monsieur le Comte de la Vernède."

"Impossible!" the Canon answered from the depths of the bed-clothes. But added, as he roused himself: "If it is he, he's gone stark staring mad!"

The servant went on down the stairs and opened the door. Calisto, half frozen, entered —and along with him a blast of bitter cold wind that blew out the light. "Ugh!" he said. "It is a night for wolves!" And groping his way past the servant he went up the stair.

By the time that he had reached the upper landing the Canon had come out to meet him—muffled in a wrapper, his feet in slippers, a lamp in his hand. "Unlucky boy!" exclaimed the

Canon. "What brings you here? Do you want to be seized by the gendarmes?"

"I'm sick of the life that I'm leading, that's why I'm here. Haven't you a fire anywhere? I'm half dead with cold."

"This is madness! Sheer madness," the Canon answered. But he led Calisto into his sitting-room, and started a blaze by throwing a fagot on the embers, still alight under the ashes, of his fire. He set the lamp upon the credence—where stood the great golden monstrance from Bastian's wheel-barrow, sparkling in the light. "Yes, this is sheer madness," he repeated. "Talk about the folly of children! Well, what does it all mean?" He settled himself into his big chair and with his elbows on its arms joined the tips of his fingers before his mouth. His lips moved, as though he were reciting a prayer.

Calisto threw his cloak upon the sofa and drew close to the fire. "I have come to the conclusion," he said, "that there is truth in the proverb that if you want a good drink you must pour it out for yourself! I had your promise to bring my affair with the Comtessine to a good end, and I relied upon it. You promised me that you either would arrange matters as I wanted them arranged here, or that you would bring the Comtessine to the Château and there marry me to her. Months and months have passed, and you have done neither of these things that you promised to do. Waiting has become utterly hateful to me. I am sick and tired of straining my eyes in search of what never comes to me. Waiting longer in that

wolf's solitude was impossible. And so here I am—come to pour out for myself the drink that I must and will have!

"But you must not suppose, Monsieur le Chanoine," he continued, "that I have for a moment doubted your good faith. I know that the papers and the money which I have left with you are absolutely secure; and I am satisfied that everything that you could do for me you have done. What I have doubted, and what I do doubt, is the part that Mother Dorothy is playing. She knows that you have in your keeping the Comtessine's title deeds, to give them to her if you see fit. It may be that she is working in the interest of her own convent—that she is trying to bring the property to the convent by inducing Adeline to become a nun."

Monsieur Jusserand smiled behind the tips of his fingers and shook his head at this suggestion, but he made no reply in words.

Calisto, growing more excited, continued: "I do not wish to resort to violence. It is my desire to gather the flower without shaking the branch. Most of all, I wish to obey you. But there is a limit to my endurance, and if I find that Mother Dorothy is trying to rob me of my bride—if I find that, be assured, Monsieur le Chanoine, that violence, and very terrible violence, will be used. For I am accustomed when any person tries to hinder me to remove that person from my path!" And Calisto, his eyes blazing, made the gesture of one who stabs.

Monsieur Jusserand never had seen his Calisto thus given over to rage. The old man was not frightened, but in spite of himself a shiver ran

through him. He dropped his upraised hands and clasped tightly the arms of his chair. "Come, come," he said, "you are talking foolishly. The reverend Mother Dorothy has done her duty by you. I fear that she may even have done a little more than her duty. If nothing has been accomplished, it is the fault of the Comtessine herself and of those miserables the Vauclairs. The hold that those creatures have upon her is inexplicable. Vauclair is one of the brigands who went up to Paris with the Marseilles Battalion. His wife must be of the same sort. No doubt they wish to marry her to one of their own vile kind and so get their share in plundering her.

"Indeed," continued Monsieur Jusserand, "I have just discovered that immediately after her coming to Avignon they contrived to make her give a little house and a scrap of land to the mother of that Pascalet who so sticks in her memory. I have put a stop altogether to her seeing them. The woman Lazuli almost made a scandal because she was refused admittance to the convent. However, I arranged the matter quietly—though at the cost, I fear, of burdening Sister Margai's conscience with a few lies. She began by telling the creature that the Comtessine was ill. That was true. She worried herself ill because her friends did not come to see her. Then Sister Margai said that the Comtessine was at death's door; and, finally, that she was dead. That settled the matter. But you see, my Calisto, we have been obliged to go pretty far in order to calm the Comtessine's disturbed mind!

"But with it all," the Canon concluded, "the unhappy girl's head still is full of that dirty peasant Pascalet. His name always is on her lips. In answer to whatever we say to her it always is 'My Pascalet! I shall wait for my Pascalet!'"

"But what does she say when you speak to her about me—the Comte de la Vernède?"

"Well, she is not very encouraging. We told her that the Comte de la Vernède was the rich and generous nobleman whom her sainted mother had commanded her to marry."

"And what did she answer?"

"That she knew of but one Comte de la Vernède and that he was dead—murdered in the prison of the Abbaye. But if there were a living and a true Comte de la Vernède, she went on, or a marquis or a duke or even a prince, she would have none of them. Only her Pascalet should put the wedding-ring on her finger—only he! But, after all, she is only a child—and this is only childish talk."

"You think, then, that she may break her promise to her dirty Pascalet?"

"Think it? I am sure of it! Very likely he's dead by this time, anyway. If he isn't, you have only to show yourself, and to tell her how much she will owe to you, to win the game. How can she refuse you—you so gallant, so handsome, who generously restore to her her fortune, who are set apart as her husband by her dead mother's command? And if she still hesitates I am not at the end of my resources. Means stronger than we have used can be employed!"

"Yes," Calisto answered, "and I am ready to employ them!"

"Gently! Gently! You misunderstand me. Marriage is a sacrament that requires common consent. What I mean is that she shall hear a higher voice than ours."

"Whose?"

"The voice of the Lord Bishop of Avignon. That can be gained easily. To put the matter in train, I already have spoken to him about you. I have told him that you are disposed to make a donation toward supplying his cathedral with the holy vessels which the Revolutionists stole away," and the Canon gave a meaning glance toward the magnificent monstrance.

"You have uttered what has been my own thought!" Calisto exclaimed delightedly. "I long to consecrate a portion of my wealth to the Church. As for this monstrance, it shall be the first of my gifts. I will take it to the Lord Bishop myself, and offer it to him as I kneel at his feet. Whatever else he needs he shall have. I will give him everything he wants!"

"Well, we can talk all this over in the morning. Now we will go to bed. You know where your room is. Marianne will give you her lamp. All will come right in time, do not fear. Good night, and God bless you!"

The Canon called Marianne, and then shuffled away in his slippers to bury himself again in his comfortable bed.

CHAPTER XXXIII

BY FAIR MEANS OR BY FOUL

CALISTO'S brain was in such a ferment that sleep was impossible. Resisting old Marianne's entreaties to go to his bed, he wrapped himself in his cloak and lay down upon the sofa. There he tossed and turned, while his fevered mind burned with longing to gain his end quickly by carrying Adeline away from the convent by force. From time to time the fire would blaze up for a moment, casting a red light upon the ceiling and throwing upon the golden sun of the great monstrance a crimson glow.

He longed for the sleep that would not come to him. He longed for morning, and cursed the slow flight of time. Time moved the slower because he could not keep track of it. When Jacquemart, up in his tower, pounded on his bell, the mistral flung the sound all over Avignon and made counting the strokes impossible. The furiously blowing wind filled the night with noises, by turns mysterious and violent. In the house were strange creakings and stranger whisperings, and now and again from the chimney would come a dull roar. Outside, the shutters banged and rattled, and at intervals a great crash would tell of a chimney dashed bodily into the street below. Then would come a moment

of absolute silence, as though the mistral were pausing to draw a long breath—and then a fresh outburst of rattles and crashes and bangs. And so, wildly but very wearily, the night went on.

At last thin rays of pale light began to show through the cracks in the shutters. and with the coming of dawn the wind died down. The noises caused by the mistral ceased, but other and stranger noises began. Calisto fancied that he heard the hoof-beats of a galloping horse. A little later Jacquemart's bell pealed forth loudly —boum! boum! boum! But it was no hour that Jacquemart was striking—it was the alarm! Then there was the sound of windows and doors opened hurriedly, and of shouts and calls. Calisto opened his shutters a very little way and peeped out, listening eagerly to the cries which went from window to window among the neighbours.

"What is it?"

"I don't know. Very likely a fire."

"No, that's not the way Jacquemart talks when there's a fire. Just hear how he bangs!"

"I'm afraid that it's another of that Bonaparte's victories," cried an old fanatic from his fourth floor.

"Heaven grant that it's the coming of our good King!" cried another of the same stripe.

The matter was set at rest for a moment by a woman who seemed to know all about it. In her shift, with her hair hanging loose, she leaned forth from her window. Clapping her hands she cried loudly: "Long live the King! Long live the Pope! Bonaparte's dead!"

Royalists and Papalists were thick in that

quarter of Avignon. The woman's cry was taken up joyfully. From all the windows came glad shouts of "Long live the Pope! Long live the King!" Somebody put out the white flag —and in five minutes the fleur-de-lys was everywhere. The people came pouring forth from their houses into the street. Some of them caught hands. Then more. Then away they all went in a farandole. The street rang with their cheers. Everybody was shouting "Long live the Pope! Long live the King!"

Monsieur Jusserand and Marianne, their clothes tumbled on anyway, came running to the window in the thick of an argument.

"I tell you it's true," cried Marianne. "Bonaparte's dead. I'm going to put out our flag."

"Softly! Softly!" said the more prudent Canon. "Wait a little with the flag until we make quite sure."

The big bell of Notre Dame des Doms—one of the few bells not sent off to be cast into cannon—began to ring loudly, sending over all the city deep sonorous waves of melody. "Ah," exclaimed Monsieur Jusserand, "if Notre Dame des Doms rings her bell it must be for the triumph of our King! Spread out the white flag, Marianne. Spread out the flag for our King!" And turning to Calisto he went on: "No more running and hiding for you now! Bonaparte is dead! God be praised for delivering us from that curse of a man!"

Calisto was overjoyed. His mind was full of delightful fancies. He saw himself, with his Comtessine, living a life of elegance at his Château de la Vernède. He saw all his enemies

cast down without his having to raise his hand. The Republican Prefect of Avignon would have to run for his life—and in a hurry! Should he delay, the Rhône that night would be carrying his body to the sea! The gendarmes of the Republic would be replaced by the Garde Royale, commanded by noblemen. Instead of the general conscription, the army would be made up of peasants and labourers, again with noblemen in every post of command. All these pleasant thoughts went whirling through Calisto's head as he hung out from the window a white silk flag embroidered with fleurs-de-lys; and like thoughts were in the heads of the others who were putting out flags from the windows round about him. The whole Royalist quarter was draped with the fleur-de-lys to its very ears! Everywhere throughout the quarter rose the shout: "Long live the Pope! Long live the King!"

But over in the Republican quarter of Avignon Jacquemart's bell and the bell of Notre Dame des Doms were telling a very different story—for, as we say in Provence, every man turns the water on his own mill. Over there everybody believed that the bells were ringing for another great victory won by the Republican army. Over there they believed not that Bonaparte was dead, but that he had won another battle greater than Marengo—that he had set the tri-colour on the towers of Milan and of Venice and had at his feet the whole of conquered Italy! The Republicans also got out their flags and also shouted and also danced farandoles—but their flag was the red, white and blue, and their

shouts were Vive la République, and along with their farandoles went the strains of the "Marseillaise."

And so the sun came up and shone blithely on one half of Avignon rejoicing under the fleur-de-lys and the other half under the tri-colour. But the rejoicing under the tri-colour was that which was destined to last.

"This news fits us," Canon Jusserand said to Calisto, with a very wrong notion of what the news really was, "as a ring fits the finger. Now you can come with me to the Lord Bishop in perfect safety. Conscriptions are ended, and Republican gendarmes are a thing of the past! Dress yourself in your best. We will go together to the holy mass that his Lordship will celebrate. When the mass is ended we will ask an audience of him, and then present to him our rich offering."

But even as he spoke, old Marianne—who had been out to gossip about the good news with her cronies—came tearing up the stair crying out: "We are lost! We are lost!" Out of breath and pale as chalk, she flung herself on the sofa and began to groan.

"What on earth's the matter with you?" exclaimed Monsieur Jusserand. "Lost? What do you mean?"

"Oh! Oh!" moaned Marianne. "The good news is not about our good King at all! It's about that vile Bonaparte. He's won another victory over more emperors. We are lost, I say! We are lost!"

"Nonsense!" cried the Canon angrily. "Who has been telling you this trash?"

"Hush! Listen!" said Calisto. "Yes, I'm right! Don't you hear the drums beating the générale?"

The Canon listened for a moment; then, with something very like a curse on his lips, ran to the window and snatched in the white flag. Calisto rolled up the flag hastily and hid it away. Through the open window came clearly the strains of the "Marseillaise"! They looked out together. They had been no quicker than the others. In all the length of the Rue du Limas not a white flag was to be seen.

There was an awkward silence, which the Canon broke. "Well, there is no sense in sticking here and making owls' eyes at each other. We had better try to find out the whole truth."

Calisto made no answer. The sudden change in the situation had both frightened and angered him. With his eyes cast down he listened moodily to the sounds which came in through the open window—the shouts from the crowd assembling in the Place du Palais des Papes, the rattle of drums, the strains of the "Marseillaise."

"Don't lose your head," the Canon continued. "I've told you a dozen times that we must play fast and loose with this Bonaparte until our good King puts him out of the way for good and all. For the moment we must play fast with him. What has happened is more likely to do us good than harm. To-day, in all this excitement, the gendarmes will not bother themselves to hunt for conscripts. You can go in safety with me to the Episcopal Palace; and when we get there we are certain to find the Lord Bishop in a very amiable mood. His

Lordship is a rabid Bonapartist, and he has good reason to be. Not very long ago he was the poor priest of a poor little parish down in the Var—one of the priests who had taken the oath to the Republic. They say that down there he entertained Bonaparte very hospitably at his curacy—it was when the little Corsican was on his way to Toulon to drive out the English—and that a great friendship was struck up between them. Anyhow, when Bonaparte became First Consul he made the poor parish priest of the Var the Lord Bishop of Avignon. And so, you see, his Lordship is certain to be in a good humour to-day if it is true that his patron has won a fresh great victory. Therefore we will go to him as we have planned to go—but what we had planned to say to him we will change a little. I shall tell him, of course, that you are a devoted servant of the Church, and that you desire to aid him with your wealth and with your influence in building up again the strength of the Church in Avignon. But I shall add that, in spite of your noble birth, you are an enthusiastic supporter of the cause of the First Consul. Do you understand?"

"I understand," said Calisto gloomily, "that neither to-day nor to-morrow shall I possess the Comtessine. And I also understand," he went on in a savage tone, "that if I chose, and if Mother Dorothy chose to help me, in an hour from now I could have the Comtessine inside of a tight-closed carriage and could be galloping away with her to La Vernède! This Bishop of yours is one of those Liberals who forever are talking about people's rights and the majesty of

the law—that you can't do this, and you mustn't do that, and it's wrong to do the other! He's one of the kind that never can give a square yes or a square no!"

"You forget how strong is the appeal that we shall make to him. It is a great deal that the Comte de la Vernède should offer his submission to the First Consul. In return for that submission his Lordship cannot refuse you what you ask."

"Can't he, though! By your own showing, he's a Liberal—he's taken the oath to the Republic. He's a friend of the brigands, and he'll follow their ways. Mark my words: he will give the Comtessine to me if she consents to be given. If she don't, he won't. It will be shorter and quicker, now while the way is open, for me to take her for myself by force."

"Listen, my Calisto. It is better to catch a butterfly by luring it with a rose than by clutching it in a grasp that will crush its wings. Let us try the gentle way first. Monseigneur Estève has the power to make the Comtessine obey her mother's command. Let us endeavour to persuade him to exert it. Should he fail us—well, in that case there may be something in the plan which you propose. Now go and dress yourself for our visit. We should start in half an hour."

"Will it ever be?" Calisto muttered between his teeth as he left the room. Adeline must know that he was a murderer. Vauclair surely had told her. For an instant a vision of three ghastly wounds flashed before his eyes—the three cruel knife-thrusts that he had given to his kind master the Comte de la Vernède!

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE LORD BISHOP OF AVIGNON

IT was because the Peace of Lunéville had been signed that the bells of Avignon were ringing. After the battle of Marengo, the soldiers of the Republic led by Bonaparte had chased the armies of the Emperors through Italy into Austria, and in such fright that they ran like rabbits at the first note of the "Marseillaise"! Then General Moreau, up in the north—with the help of Augerau and Macdonald and Brune—fought an army of Austrians and Émigrés and won the battle of Hohenlinden. It was after that great victory that the brave General Brune—who came from the Limousine—cracked one of the jokes that he was so full of on a prisoner, an Émigré, who came from the same country and spoke the Limousine dialect. "I'll give you your life, you poor wretch who fight against your own country," he said, "on one condition: that you go to your Austrian Emperor and tell him that if he does not instantly bring the keys of his capitol to General Bonaparte I, Brune, cadet of Brives-la-Gaillarde, will give my black horse his dinner of oats off your Emperor's own table in your Emperor's own palace!" History is silent as to whether or not the traitor saved his life on these terms. But it is certain that the

very next day the Emperor of Austria sued for peace; and that he sealed it by signing the famous Treaty of Lunéville—which gave to the French Republic the Rhine frontier and the Ionian Islands, and which erected the Cisalpine Republic and so spread liberty under the tricolour over the whole of Central Europe! It was for that great treaty that the bells of Avignon were set a-ringing, and for which cannon thundered from the Rocher des Doms!

The bells still were pealing and the cannon still were booming when Calisto and Monsieur Jusserand—followed by old Marianne, carrying the gold monstrance wrapped in a napkin—came out into the Rue du Limas on their way to the Bishop's palace. The street was absolutely deserted—the discomfited Royalists having hidden away in their holes again—but the very houses were shaking with the banging of the cannon and the clatter of the bells and the roar of the near-by crowd.

Presently, when they were come to the Place du Palais des Papes, they were a part of the crowd themselves—and what a crowd it was! All the Reds of Avignon were there, shouting at the top of their lungs; and shouting with them were hundreds of others who were making a demonstration for the sake of prudence and who much more gladly would have cheered for the King. The swarm was so thick that they got through it with the utmost difficulty—Calisto, leading, trying to make a way by the vigorous use of his elbows; the Canon doing his best to follow; Marianne, red as a poppy, her cap all awry, carrying the big monstrance like a

baby, lagging along in the rear. Gendarmes were among the multitude; and, although it was quite certain that the very last thing they were thinking about was the conscription, Calisto shivered at the sight of them and did his best to give them a wide berth. The constant stops that they were compelled to make added to his nervousness. At each he felt that he was being stopped purposely, and that in another instant he would feel on his shoulder the grip of a gendarme's hand.

Suddenly he felt some one twitch his coat from behind, and at the same moment a child's voice said "Bonjour, Monsieur Calisto!" He faced about hurriedly, but there was no familiar face among those near him and for an instant he thought that his ears must have played him a trick. Then, looking down, he caught sight of a little boy wriggling away among the legs of the crowd and looking back in evident dread that Calisto might be following him. The little chap wore a red cap and a cockade, quite with the air of a man; but for all that he had grown a good deal in the years that had passed since Calisto had seen him, Calisto knew him for Vauclair's son, Clairet.

The sight of this child, the son of the man who already had put the gendarmes on his track, sent a thrill of fear through Calisto that made him forget everything but his own safety. His nearest and most secure place of shelter for the moment was the Bishop's palace. Leaving Monsieur Jusserand and old Marianne to look out for themselves, he squirmed his way through the crowd like a viper and with an astonishing

celerity gained the palace door. Two gendarmes stood guard there drowsily, paying no attention to the many priests and monks who were hurrying past them into the building; but when Calisto joined the ingoing throng one of these drowsy-looking guards clapped a hand on his shoulder and halted him shortly. This was a shivering experience, but Calisto retained his presence of mind. "Do not touch me," he said, "I am the Comte de la Vernède."

"Can't help who you are. Orders are that only priests or people with priests go in. Stand back!"

By that time Monsieur Jusserand had come up, Marianne following him. "Monsieur le Comte is in my company," he said to the gendarme.

"Then it's all right. Pass, citizen!" And as the Canon and his companions entered the doorway the gendarme resumed his position and his drowsy look.

All the priests and monks of Avignon—most of whom heartily wished Bonaparte in the depths of hell—were crowding to pay their compliments to Monseigneur upon his illustrious friend's achievement. The ante-room was packed full of them. But it was a silent company, as silent and as grave as though the ante-room had been a church—as, indeed, it had a little the flavour of being because of the faint scent of incense from the near-by oratory. Among the black-frocked priests and the brown-gowned and grey-gowned friars Calisto, clad in bright-hued silks set off by gold buttons and fine lace, was a brilliant figure. A little

sigh of admiration went up from the young abbés as they stood on tip-toe to look at him; when the name of "Monsieur le Comte de la Vernède" was called the older priests and the dignitaries of the religious orders, clustered before the door of the audience chamber, drew back and bowed respectfully to let him pass.

Monseigneur d'Avignon himself was not a little moved when his usher called this aristocratic name. Since he had been raised to the Episcopal chair of the ancient capitol of Christendom not a single member of the old nobility had crossed his threshold. From afar they had looked askance upon him—knowing that he had been raised from his little parish to his bishopric because of the friendship of the brigand Bonaparte. Having no liking for a bishop made in that way, they had let him severely alone.

Therefore his Lordship's cordial smile was very genuine as he came forward to welcome the Comte de la Vernède, and his satisfaction was very genuine as that nobleman kissed his ring. It was a great deal that such a member of the aristocracy should come to him at all; it was more that he should come bringing so magnificent a gift; but it was most of all that he should come with congratulations upon the great achievement of General Bonaparte. And his Lordship was pleased, also, that with him should come such a seeming irreconcilable Royalist as the Canon Jusserand. Altogether, the incident was a most gratifying one. In the names of the Republic and the First Consul he

accepted the congratulations; in his own name and in that of the Church he accepted the splendid monstrance; and ended by inviting his two so-welcome visitors to a private audience later in the day, and to be a part of his suite—upon the conclusion of the public reception—at the Te Deum that was to be sung in the cathedral. He was perfectly honest in it all, this good Bishop. His own soul was pure and his nature upright and generous. But because he was so ready to believe that others were like himself, because he was so unsuspicious of his kind, a curious thing happened: On the 27th Pluviose of the Year X the people of the Papal City saw in the cortège of the Lord Bishop of Avignon, listening with a seemly devotion to the Te Deum that was sung in the cathedral church of Notre Dame des Doms, a murderer who also was as thorough a scoundrel as ever the earth had borne!

Later in the day, at the friendly private audience which Monseigneur gave to Monsieur le Comte de la Vernède and to Monsieur le Chanoine Jusserand, the more personal matter was brought forward and was dealt with in the most satisfactory way. The written command of the Marquise d'Ambrun that her daughter should marry Calisto des Sablées de la Vernède was produced, and was accepted at its full face value. His Lordship, rightly enough, declared that such a command was final and should be obeyed; and he promised that he himself would visit the Comtessine in the Ursuline Convent and would endeavour to bring her to repentance and a better mind.

The very next day he fulfilled this promise, and his unannounced arrival at the convent turned that placid but easily excited religious establishment quite upside down. The whole Sisterhood was in commotion when it was known that the Lord Bishop's carriage was before the convent door. The bells were set a-ringing, and there was a lively discussion and a violent clashing of opinions as to how and where he should be received. This discussion came to nothing. While it still was in progress the cause of it had knocked at the little door and had been admitted by the porteress, Sister Margai. In utter confusion and abasement, Sister Margai led his lordship along the garden path, absolutely without knowing—as she subsequently stated—whether she were standing on her head or on her heels!

Monseigneur Estève perceived her tribulation, and with a kindly desire to put her at her ease began to talk to her. "Tell me, Sister," he said, "what is our Comtessine d'Ambrun doing in these days?"

This carelessly put question was a searching one. "Monseigneur," Sister Margai replied with a deep reverence, "I cannot answer you without committing the heavy sin of lying!"

"What can you possibly mean, my child?" the Bishop said kindly. "Answer me at once. Do not tremble that way. You have nothing to fear."

"Monseigneur, I have been ordered to say that the Comtessine is dead."

"That is very extraordinary! Why were you ordered to say that she was dead?"

"Monseigneur, I do not know."

"But you have said that she was dead?"

"Monseigneur, I have!" and Sister Margai heaved a very deep and a very sorrowful sigh.

"My Sister," said the Bishop gravely, "you have committed a great sin. For your penance, I order you to go to whomsoever you told that the Comtessine was dead and to tell them that you have lied to them and to ask them for forgiveness."

Monseigneur would have pressed the matter farther, but at that moment they came to the chapel door. Inside the chapel the nuns were in waiting for him. As they caught sight of the little Bishop—he was a lean little man, with one shoulder higher than the other—they fell prostrate, their faces close to the stone floor. As he said "Benedicat vos!" and made the sign of blessing them, they arose and ranged themselves in two lines. Between these lines he passed on to the altar slowly, extending his hand to right and to left that the Sisters might kiss his ring. The older nuns performed this act of homage with downcast eyes; but the younger ones could not help glancing up at him from under their veils—and one light-minded little nun, when he had passed her, whispered to her neighbour: "Mon dieu! How little he is!"

Monseigneur Estève, who was quick-eared and fond of a joke even at his own expense, turned about briskly. "And also just a trifle hump-backed!" he added; and, with a smile at the poor little nun as she went quite scarlet, passed on to the altar. At the altar he became

grave again—delivering there a short address to the Sisters and then dismissing them.

These formalities being accomplished, Adeline was brought to him in the bishop's room of the convent and in the presence of the Mother Superior he had a long talk with her. He reasoned with her gravely, as a father might have done, pointing out to her the scandal that would ensue should she disobey her mother's command; and with the coaxing tenderness of a father he stroked her cheeks and patted gently her hands. But neither to his reasoning nor to his coaxing would she in the least yield. To all his urgings she opposed a firm negative.

Adeline no longer was a child. She was a tall and slender and very beautiful woman, and she had a woman's will. With her beauty was an indefinable charm that compelled not only admiration but respect. The Bishop yielded to this charm, in spite of himself, and found the work cut out for him extremely difficult. At the end of his final appeal she remained unshaken. Her rich sweet voice rang clear as she answered: "Never shall I give my troth to any one but my Pascalet!" As she spoke the words "my Pascalet" she was transfigured—the flush of wild roses was in her cheeks, her eyes flashed like the dawn!

Monseigneur d'Avignon, a wise man in his generation, for the time being gave up the conflict. "The world wasn't made in a day," he said to himself; and said aloud to Adeline that he begged her to reflect upon what he had urged upon her, and to be ready to give him a final answer in a fortnight's time. Then, the

nuns buzzing about him, he left the convent and returned to his palace—whence he despatched to the Canon Jusserand a brief report of how his interview with the Comtessine had gone.

CHAPTER XXXV

A PRAYER TO SAINT URSULA

WHEN the Bishop's messenger, Joselet, came to Canon Jusserand's house he found there only old Marianne—and a terrible taking he found her in! Before she had the door fairly open she burst out: "Oh how the seven gendarmes frightened me when they came here last night! I'm all in a tremble over it still!"

"That's very bad," said Joselet sympathizingly. He was a simple soul, with just about enough wit to come into the house when it rained, and to light and to put out the altar candles.

"No, it's not so very bad," Marianne answered, "for they were after Monsieur le Comte, and they didn't get him."

"Ah, that's very good," said Joselet.

"No, it's not very good, for Monsieur le Comte had to crawl out of the cellar window in the dead of night and fly for his life."

"That's very bad indeed."

"No, it's not very bad, for the Porte de l'Oulle wasn't shut and he was able to get safe away to his Château."

"That's very good indeed."

"No, it's not very good, for Monsieur le

Chanoine had to go off with the gendarmes to the Hôtel de Ville and try to smooth things over and make explanations."

Joselet's slow wits were put completely out of tune by this boxing back and forth of his sympathies. "Heaven for your good luck, and hell for your bad luck," he said shortly. "Here, take this letter and give it to Monsieur le Chanoine when he returns." And Joselet twisted about on his heel and went away.

It was Clairet who had brought about Calisto's midnight flight from Avignon. The little scamp had spent the whole day away from home, doing so much more than his share to help celebrate the Peace of Lunéville that when night came he found himself in an awkward dilemma: he was very hungry and wanted his supper; he was in dire fear that his whole day's absence from home would be rewarded with a spanking! Pushed forward by his hunger and pulled backward by his dread, he approached his home slowly. Just on the threshold a brilliant plan for creating a diversion occurred to him. Instantly he dashed into the house and burst out with: "Mother! Father! Such news! You'll never guess it! I've seen Monsieur Calisto!"

Clairet's plan worked to a charm. Vauclair started up from the supper-table as though a thunderbolt had fallen. "Where did you see him?" he exclaimed. "Are you sure that it was he?"

"I saw him on the Place du Palais. I'm quite sure that it was he. I called out to him 'Bonjour, Monsieur Calisto,' and he turned

around and glared at me horribly. Then I ran away. It was he for sure!"

In spite of Lazuli's entreaties to finish his supper, Vauclair grabbed his hat and dashed off to the Hôtel de Ville. "I won't wait a minute!" he cried. "Murderer and shirking coward that he is, I must start the gendarmes after him this instant! At last I've got him—and I've got him fast!"

But, as the event proved, Vauclair had not got him fast. Again Calisto slipped away from the gendarmes, and this time hid himself at the Château de la Vernède. There, with his peasants keeping sharp watch for him, he was safe; and there he went through another season of waiting even more irksome than that which he had passed at La Garde. A whole month dragged slowly on without news coming to him from Avignon. He was in a rage with everybody; but his liveliest rage was against the Bishop, who he believed was playing him false.

However, Monseigneur d'Avignon was not to blame in the premises. His second visit to Adeline had been as fruitless as his first visit. Equally fruitless had been his third visit. The more that he lectured the Comtessine upon the sin of disobedience, the more vigorously did she assert her intention of obeying only her own heart. She would marry Pascalet, or she would marry nobody. On that she made her stand.

Mother Dorothy and Canon Jusserand, satisfied that neither persuasion nor argument would have any effect upon her, resorted to measures of a sterner sort. They shut her up in a cell:

to give her an opportunity, they said, to reflect upon her evil courses, and to pray to Saint Ursula to set her in the right way. She was to make a novena, Mother Dorothy told her. When her novena was ended Monseigneur would come to receive her final answer. If the answer was not what they hoped that it would be, she would be sent—so Mother Dorothy intimated—in a closed carriage to La Vernède and there delivered to the husband chosen for her by her sainted mother the Marquise.

Shut fast in her cell—lighted by a single high-up window, bare save for the agonized Christ upon His cross hung against the wall, with only her rosary and her book of hours—Adeline's novena was one long torture: with the coarser torture imminent of being delivered over at the end of it to a man utterly unknown to her—very likely old and cruel and jealous—who would make her life as hard as the very stones. But she was resolute. Never, never would she yield, she said to herself again and again. Sooner would she die. Before the crucifix she cast herself in prayer. But the eyes of the agonized Christ were turned upward and away from her—He did not seem to hear. Then she invoked the grace of sweet Saint Ursula—but no grace came. Even her human friends had forsaken her. Lazuli and Vauclair no longer came to see her. She prayed again, this time that these good friends might come to her. They came not. And Pascalet? Now that there was peace again why did he not come and deliver her? She prayed for his coming. He did not come. God, the saints, her friends, her lover,

seemed all to have deserted her. Creeping into her heart came cold despair!

As this agonizing novena drew close to its end Monsieur Jusserand and Mother Dorothy decided to make one more strong effort to break Adeline's stubborn will. On the last evening of her seclusion—the evening preceding the day on which she was to receive the Lord Bishop and give him her final answer—the Canon brought to the convent the title deeds to her estate and the written command, signed by her mother, that she should marry Calisto des Sablées de la Vernède. It was his hope that when she saw these papers with her own eyes, and was assured that the title deeds were to be restored to her by the man whom she was to wed, she at last would yield.

When Canon Jusserand and Mother Dorothy softly entered Adeline's cell they found her on her knees before the crucifix—praying, but praying almost hopelessly, to the impassive Christ whose eyes were turned upward and away. They began their attack on the side of worldly interest. They spread out before her the documents which made good her title to the estate of La Garde, and declared with a convincing earnestness that on the day of her marriage these documents would be surrendered into her keeping. Her answer completely cut the ground from under their feet. Wealth and rank were nothing to her, she said. It was her desire to be one of the people. She wished to be as her Pascalet was. That would please him most when he returned to her. She was sure, she added, in a voice that shook a little, that he

would return to her very soon—very soon indeed, now that the peace was signed.

Baffled by this reply, that made any attempt at argument hopeless, Canon Jusserand advanced his second line of attack—on the side of filial duty—by placing in her hand the paper signed by her mother. Adeline tried to read the paper, but at the first glance she saw only the signature; and the sight of her mother's name, written in her mother's hand, so overcame her that her eyes filled with tears and she could not read the words to which that signature was affixed. She pressed the signature to her lips. It seemed as though she heard her mother calling to her. She trembled from head to foot. Then, as she looked at the paper again, she saw another name—a name that checked her tears and that made her see clearly. With eyes not tearful, but flashing, she read:

I, the Marquise Adelaide d'Ambrun, give in marriage my daughter, the Comtessine Adeline d'Ambrun, to the faithful Calisto des Sablées de la Vernède. I believe that my daughter will carry out my wishes, and so will show her obedience to her unhappy mother, ADELAIDE D'AMBRUN.

As Adeline read these words the whole horror of the situation was clear to her. Her clenched hands, holding the paper, fell to her sides—tearing it into two pieces. Her face became a dead white. Her breath came in gasps. In a broken voice, shrill with dread, she cried: "*That* man! *That* man the Comte de la Vernède! That is no Comte de la Vernède! That is Calisto—the murderer!" And with a pierc-

ing cry that went ringing through the whole convent she fell to the floor.

The first care of Canon Jusserand and of Mother Dorothy was to force open Adeline's clenched hands and to secure possession of the torn paper. This being accomplished, they picked her up between them and laid her on her bed. Then Mother Dorothy went out into the passage and called sharply for Sister Margai —who, alarmed by the cry that she had heard, came up the stairs two steps at a time. When she saw the Comtessine, dead white, stretched out upon the bed she fell on her knees, with clasped hands, exclaiming: "Oh my Adeline, it was you who gave that dreadful cry—it was you, giving yourself up to death! Oh great Saint Ursula of Jesus, have pity on her!"

"Nonsense!" said Mother Dorothy. "The child is not dead. She is only in a faint. She must be put to bed at once and well warmed. See to that, Sister Margai, and be quick about it. I will send you vinegar and orange-flower water." The Mother Superior hurried out of the room. Canon Jusserand, after making the sign of the cross with his thumb upon Adeline's forehead, followed her, murmuring a prayer.

Being left alone with the apparently lifeless body, Sister Margai resorted to treatment which —though less practical than emotional—was effective. "Oh Adeline! Adeline!" she cried, clasping her arms about the neck of the fainting girl. "You cannot be dead! I shall not let you be dead! Wake! Monseigneur d'Avignon is coming!"

At that name a little tremor went through

Adeline's rigid body, her eyelids closed for an instant over her staring eyes and then opened naturally. In a voice that was the merest whisper of sound, she said tremulously: "The murderer! The murderer, Monseigneur! Deliver me from him!"

"My Adeline, there is no murderer here. You are safe with me, with Sister Margai who loves you!" That Adeline had spoken, although so wildly, comforted Sister Margai greatly. Adeline had had another such attack as that which had overcome her reason once before, the kind-hearted nun concluded; and as she had recovered then, so would she again recover if given rest and care. All the same, Sister Margai was puzzled. It was the shock caused by the burning of Bédoin, and the death—as she believed—of Monsieur Randoulet in the flames, that had unhinged Adeline's mind that other time. What fresh shock could she have had when only Monsieur Jusserand and Mother Dorothy were with her? What had caused her woeful cry? What had set her to praying to be delivered from a murderer? Sister Margai had much to think about—as she sat in the gathering dusk beside Adeline, talking to her soothingly and gently stroking her hands. Her thoughts were so painfully perplexing that she was glad to have Sister Scholastica come hurrying into the room, bringing the vinegar and orange-flower water and bringing also a lamp. She had been sent by Mother Dorothy—who herself was engaged with Canon Jusserand in trying to piece together the paper that Adeline had torn. Should the Bishop require sight of it

again, and find it in two fragments, he might ask awkward questions.

The tender and soothing ministrations of these two good Sisters, who loved her very dearly, in a little while restored Adeline's mind to its balance and brought back some of her strength again. And then their sympathy, and her own need of unburdening her soul of the sorrow that was crushing her, led her to tell them of the desperate strait in which she was: that she either must consent to be married to a murderer, or must commit the sin of disobeying her dead mother's express command. She told them the whole story—and as they heard it the good Sisters also became desperate and gave way to tears and groans. When it was finished, by a common impulse, they fell on their knees and implored the holy Saint Ursula of Jesus, patroness of the convent, to show them a way of escape; to open a door through which her servant might pass and be in safety.

The Sisters, at least, believed that Saint Ursula heard and completely answered their prayer. To all of them, as they prayed, came the same thought: safety could be reached through the door of Saint Ursula's own convent; protection perpetual could be found beneath the veil which Saint Ursula and her eleven thousand companions, virgins and martyrs, had worn! To Adeline, although she also accepted it, this answer was at once harrowingly incomplete and cruel. It was true that beneath the veil of Saint Ursula she would find safety, but for her love it would be a shroud. Death in life was before her, or insufferable dishonour—

the shelter of the pure cloister, or the arms of a creature foul with crime. "God and Saint Ursula help me," she whispered. "I choose that which my Pascalet would have me choose!"

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE PRICE OF VICTORY

WHEN the convent bell rang matins Adeline was sleeping so peacefully that Sister Scholastica and Sister Margai did not hesitate to leave her —that they might join the other Sisters in the chapel in singing the three anthems and the three psalms. For this Mother Dorothy reproved them; and in answer was assured that not only had Adeline recovered from her seizure, but that the blessed Saint Ursula had put a high and a holy purpose in her heart. When Monseigneur d'Avignon came to visit her, they added, he would be surprised and edified by finding how willingly she would make her submission to the will of God.

This good news brought to the reverend Mother Dorothy a profound happiness. Evidently, all was going as she wished that it should go. The marriage which she so longed for would take place; and by helping to bring it about she would have atoned, she felt, for the sin of her youth. When the child who had been abandoned in the sand-pits of Aramon should be firmly established as the lord of Aramon, then indeed would the erring father and mother of that child have done their duty by him to the full. She turned back into the

chapel and knelt alone at the altar, pouring out her thankfulness to God that he had permitted her at last to set right the wrong that she had done. To her, Adeline's cry that Calisto was a murderer was the mere raving utterance of a disordered mind. With joy and gratitude in her heart the Mother Superior returned to her cell. The other Sisters already had gone back to the boards that served them for beds. Presently the convent was silent again, wrapped in its midnight repose.

One nun did not sleep, and soon a strange dull noise broke the silence—a soft sound, yet penetrating, made by the lashing of tender flesh. No one paid any attention to it. Rarely did a night pass undisturbed by this sound—sometimes from one cell, sometimes from another, but always the same. It would last while a *miserere* would be recited. Then it would stop, and silence would come again. That night the sound lasted longer than usual, and it came from the cell of Sister Margai. In that poor nun's breast, very tender and human, Adeline's passionate lamentations for her lost love had wrought havoc—stirring up nettle memories of a spring-time over which the winter of the cloister unavailingly had cast its snows. Adeline's vivid talk of Pascalet had brought vividly into her own mind her little heart-romance when she was the turkey-herd at the farm of Pèire-Avon; had set clearly before her eyes that younger son of Tòni's who jollily had kissed her behind the yew-tree once in the long, long ago. To holy Saint Ursula she prayed to hide from her this betraying vision. But Saint Ursula

heard not her prayer. It was then, prayer failing her, that she exorcised her vision with the seven-knotted scourge. That day, when Monseigneur d'Avignon knocked at the gate of the convent, the Sister who opened to him had eyes wan and sunken and a face as pale as the wax of the altar candles—and as pure.

Mother Dorothy, on the contrary, as she hastened to meet the Lord Bishop, had a face so bright with happiness that she seemed suddenly to be younger by a good ten years. So full was she of the glad news that she had for him that she began to tell it before she fairly had risen from kissing his ring.

"Monseigneur," she said joyfully, "the novena has borne good fruit! Saint Ursula herself has touched the heart of the Comtessine. At last she is willing to obey!"

"God be praised!" exclaimed the good Bishop earnestly.

"Yes, Monseigneur," Mother Dorothy continued, "the devil who has been tempting her to disobedience fled from her body last night. In the presence of this your servant, and of the Canon Jusserand, he forsook her—but with such wrathful violence that for a time we feared that he had bereft her of her mind."

"Poor child! Poor innocent child," Monseigneur said pityingly.

"Then it was," Mother Dorothy went on, "that our holy Saint Ursula of Jesus appeared to her and drove the evil spirit utterly away. Suddenly, in an instant, the Comtessine had back again her reason. And then, in the presence of Sister Margai and Sister Scholastica,

who were caring for her, she holily declared her willingness to submit to the will of God."

As the Mother Superior set forth these edifying facts they were advancing, preceded by Sister Margai, through the corridors of the convent, and as she reached her satisfactory conclusion they came to the door of Adeline's cell.

"Benedicatas Domino!" called Sister Margai.

"Deo gratias!" came the answer in Adeline's voice, as sweet and as clear as the song of a bird.

Together the Lord Bishop and the Mother Superior entered the cell. The door behind them was closed.

Left in perilous proximity to the key-hole, Sister Margai found herself beset by that form of the sin of curiosity which manifests itself in eavesdropping. To combat her temptation she had resort to her rosary—telling her beads aloud, with intent to set up the sound of her own voice as a barrier between what she should not hear and her too-eager ears. This system of defense was not wholly effective. She did not hear the words spoken within the cell, but she did hear the tones of the three voices. At first, these were gentle and friendly; but presently, after a moment of silence, the voice of Mother Dorothy rose shrill and loud and menacing; then the voice of the Bishop interposed to check her outburst; and with these evidently conflicting utterances came the sound of Adeline's sobs. The Bishop's remonstrances were ineffectual. Mother Dorothy's voice rose louder and shriller—never had Sister Margai heard it so fierce and so terri-

ble. She seemed almost to bark, to howl, in her rage. The Bishop's voice became deeper and sterner. Adeline's voice was raised in a frightened cry. Sister Margai, as a final measure, resolutely put her fingers in her ears. At last the door of the cell opened and the two came out. Sister Margai unstopped her ears, as was her right, and so without sin heard the Lord Bishop say these extraordinary words: "Sister Dorothy, the devil that was cast out from the Comtessine's body surely must have entered into yours!"

"Pardon, Monseigneur!" cried the Mother Superior, kneeling before him.

"Sister," the Bishop answered, "when you have done a sufficient penance you will win your pardon from God!" He made the sign of the cross over her and walked on.

Mother Dorothy arose and followed him and knelt to him again, asking: "Monseigneur, what penance must I do?"

Still walking onward, the Lord Bishop said in a tone deep and sad and grave: "You must become the serving-sister of the convent. And you must sew the robe and the veil in which, on this coming Ash Wednesday, the nun Adeline will take upon her Saint Ursula's vows!"

Leaving her kneeling there, overwhelmed by her shame, Monseigneur d'Avignon passed on and left the convent. Not until she heard the wheels of his departing carriage did the stricken and humbled Sister Dorothy, Mother Superior no longer, rise from her knees. She staggered to her cell, utterly broken by the sentence passed

upon her to become the serving-sister of the convent over which for so many years she had ruled!

Being come again to his palace, the Lord Bishop despatched thence two writings. One of these was a letter to the Canon Jusserand, informing him that there could be no marriage between the Comtessine d'Ambrun and the Comte de la Vernède—for the sufficient reason that the Comtessine, by the grace of God, had decided to profess religion in the Order of Saint Ursula and so would be relieved from obedience to the command of her sainted mother the Marquise. Beyond making Canon Jusserand furiously angry with the brigand of a Republican Bishop who had played him false, this letter produced no immediate result. In a little while, conveyed by a trusty messenger, it was on its way to Calisto at La Vernède.

His Lordship's other writing was a parchment, duly signed and sealed, which formally appointed Sister Scholastica to be Mother Superior of the Convent of Saint Ursula in Sister Dorothy's place. This produced a result both immediate and violent. The whole convent fairly was set in a whirl by it. Most of the Sisters, quite inconsequently, took to weeping; and they all chattered like so many pies. When the commotion a little had subsided, they carried out the command of the Bishop in their own way. They escorted their late Mother Superior from her cell to the chapel; and there, while the convent bell was tolled, they sung the *Miserere* and the *De profundis*—quite as though they were conducting her funeral. Then, weeping

over her, they led her to the kitchen and put on her the apron that as serving-sister was her badge of office: and left the poor shamed creature there charged with the duty of making ready a dish of carrots and a dish of greens. They had cried, "The Queen is dead!" but they still had to cry "Long live the Queen!" In the kitchen they left their tears and their long faces. The moment that they were out in the corridor they became all gaiety, chirping with laughter and fairly dancing a "round" that carried them to the door of the new Mother Superior's cell. Thence, while the convent bell rang out gaily, they escorted Sister Scholastica to the chapel and sang a *Te Deum* in her honour and otherwise gave thanks to God. Being thus installed in her new office, Mother Scholastica began her reign by an act of grace: to all the Sisters she granted an hour of recreation in the garden—and away they all went to work off some of their surplus high spirits by scampering about in the open air.

Adeline thankfully went into the garden with the others, eager—after her seclusion of more than a week—to be again in the blessed sunshine. But amidst the gaiety of the frolicsome Sisters she was most bitterly sad. She had saved herself, she believed, from worse than death, but her salvation had been won at the cost of breaking her heart. She would not be defiled by the foul love of a murderer, but the sacrifice of the pure love of her Pascalet was the price that she had paid for her deliverance. Sitting in a quiet place apart, she gave way to her cruel sorrow. She longed for sympathy, and

looked about her for Sister Margai—who knew her trouble, and whose tender heart was full of compassion. Sister Margai was not in the garden. While the hour of sunshine lasted, Adeline nourished her grief alone.

CHAPTER XXXVII

ASH-WEDNESDAY EVE

SISTER MARGAI was not in the garden because she was ministering, a little tardily, to the welfare of her own soul. Monseigneur had ordered her to do penance for the lie that she had confessed to him by confessing it also to whomsoever she had told it. The discharge of that penance, as Sister Margai well knew, would involve her, and instantly, in very serious trouble with Mother Dorothy. Therefore she made what terms she could with her conscience and put the matter off. To her credit be it said that at the first possible safe moment—that is to say, the moment that Mother Dorothy's degradation was accomplished—she made use of the liberty that was hers, as a lay Sister, to leave the convent and hurried off to confess her lie to the Vauclairs.

Her confession, coupled with her statement that Adeline would be free to see them without restriction until she took the vows, caused a whirlwind of happiness in the little house in the Place du Grand Paradis—and Sister Margai found her sin forgiven her because of her bringing of such good news. Lazuli was quite frantic with delight. Vauclair was only a touch less frantic. In an instant they were bustling into their best

clothes. "We will take her her Christmas nougat!" cried Lazuli. "And we will tell her," Vauclair added, "that we did not keep Christmas because we thought that she was dead!" Lazuli scraped a few coins together. On their way to the convent they bought the very best nougat that was to be had in the pastry-cook's shop at the corner of the Place du Change.

It was a tempest of a meeting that they all had in the convent parlor. Adeline flung herself into Lazuli's arms and cried with happiness on that tender mother-heart. Vauclair, finding her grown to be a tall young lady, dignified and beautiful, felt shyly uncertain whether he should address her with the formal "you" or the familiar "thou"—until he also found himself caught close in her arms. Clairet, grown to be a big boy, was confused—and a little incensed—when this beautiful lady kissed him quite as though he were a little chap of only three or four years old. And when these kisses and embraces were ended, they immediately were begun all over again. It seemed as though they never would have done!

At last they were able to settle down and to talk coherently; and then Adeline told them of the struggle through which she had passed: of the machinations of the Canon Jusserand and Mother Dorothy to compel her to marry Calisto; of the part that Monseigneur d'Avignon had taken in the matter; of her final escape from the horror that threatened her by promising that in a fortnight's time, on the coming Ash Wednesday, she would take the veil. And as she ended her story she flung herself once

more into Lazuli's arms and sobbed brokenly: "And so never, never may I meet my Pascalet again!"

Vauclair could not contain himself. Although the holy walls of a convent were about him, and the Blessed Virgin's image in plaster was in the niche close behind him, and a picture of Saint Ursula hung on the wall above his head, his rage had to find vent. "Sacré nom de pas Dieu!" he cried. "I must rid the earth of that accursed creature! Of him, and of that accursed Canon too!"

"Hush! Hush, my Vauclair!" exclaimed Lazuli. "What dreadful words for you to be saying here!"

"Where is he now, this Calisto?" Vauclair asked sharply, giving no heed to Lazuli's remonstrance.

"I don't know where he is," Adeline answered. "I only know that he knows where I am. In spite of being sheltered here behind bolts and bars, I tremble when I think of him. I feel that my only secure shelter against him is the shelter of Saint Ursula's veil."

"Poor Pascalet!" sighed Lazuli.

"My heart dies within me when I think of Pascalet," and Adeline, sobbing, covered her face with her hands.

"Did you know that he went through Avignon while you were hidden in the cave of Curmier, and while I was in Malaucène?" Lazuli asked.

"No. How could I know it? Ah, to think that he was so near!"

"Yes, he was here," Lazuli continued.

"The neighbours told me about his visit to our house."

"Those neighbours who were so cruel to you?"

"Yes, but they are sorry now. They know now that they were wrong. They told me that he came here with a battalion on its way to join the army of General Bonaparte in Italy. The battalion was halted here for the night. He came to our house and knocked and knocked, and called for all of us by name—for you, for me, for Vauclair. He sat on our step, they said, the whole night through—hoping, no doubt, that we were gone somewhere on a visit and might at any moment return. At daybreak, when the drums of the battalion beat the assembly, they saw him go away. Then he went on to Italy. I feel in my heart that he never will return!"

"And I feel in *my* heart," said Adeline very earnestly, "that he surely *will* return! I shall pray to Saint Ursula of Jesus, our holy patroness, that I may have sight of him again on earth—though it be only through the convent grating—and I am sure, I am *sure*, Lazuli, that sweet Saint Ursula will grant my prayer!" And again Adeline wept upon Lazuli's breast.

Vauclair's good heart was full of pain for Adeline. As he could not think of anything comforting to say, he attempted a diversion. "Isn't there something in that basket of yours, Lazuli?" he asked.

"Of course there is," she answered, perceiving his kindly purpose, "and I ought to be ashamed of myself for forgetting it."

"You see," said Vauclair, "we couldn't keep Christmas last year, when we thought that you were dead. And so——"

"And so," Lazuli broke in, "we have brought you your Christmas nougat now. Here it is—red nougat and white nougat. It will make you think of our Christmas Eve in Paris, in William the Patriot's house, with the dear Planchots."

Vauclair's diversion was a success. Adeline, a true Provençale, was quick to smile through her tears. "Oh, how good of you to think of it!" she cried happily. "Come, Clairet," she went on, "one of these bars is for you. I haven't forgotten how fond you are of nougat, you see!"

But Clairet, in growing to be a big boy, had left his little greedy ways behind him. He reddened and drew back. Adeline could not induce him to accept the bar of nougat. She had to keep the whole of it for herself.

All too soon, when the convent bell rang for service, Sister Margai came to call Adeline away. But the parting was not a sorrowful one—because the Vauclairs were to come again, and as many times as possible, in the course of the remaining fortnight during which they would not be separated from her by iron bars.

When the visitors had left the convent, Vauclair said shortly: "I have business to attend to. I am going to the Hôtel de Ville and to the Rue du Limas——" and so walked off briskly, leaving Lazuli and Clairet to go home alone. Lazuli did not try to dissuade him, but she had small hope that he would accomplish anything.

"That clever scoundrel is on his guard," she said to herself. "It will not be to-day, nor yet to-morrow, that he falls into the hands of the gendarmes!"

Lazuli was right, as she was very apt to be. Calisto was safe in his Château; and as Vauclair turned into the Rue du Limas he actually saw—without knowing what he saw—Canon Jusserand's messenger, bearing the Bishop's letter, starting for La Vernède. But Vauclair was convinced that the game that he was after was not far away; and he impressed his conviction so strongly upon the Commandant of Gendarmes that the search was continued keenly and widely from that time on.

It was with a wild outburst of rage that Calisto read the Bishop's letter. But a letter from Canon Jusserand, that accompanied it, not only quieted his rage but filled him with a fierce hope again. "If you still are determined, in spite of all, to marry the Comtessine," Monsieur Jusserand wrote, "you will be helped to accomplish your purpose. On the eve of Ash Wednesday the convent door will be opened to you, and the Comtessine will be delivered into your hands to do with as you please." Calisto wanted nothing better than that! With Lou Pounchu and Rocofort he arranged his plans.

At the other end of the line, in Avignon, Canon Jusserand arranged plans with the serving-sister of the convent, Sister Dorothy. They were quite simple. On the eve of Ash Wednesday she was to procure and to give to him the key of the door, opening upon the Rue Porte-Evêque, of the uncloistered apartment in which

Adeline was housed. Also, the Canon gave some useful information to Lou Pounchu and Rocofort—when those worthies, taking advantage of the carnival, wandered masked in the vicinity of the convent and made themselves familiar with the ground. Finally, on the eve of the fast, he confessed Adeline and congratulated her upon the holy act which she would accomplish on the ensuing day—and then received the key from Sister Dorothy and carried it to his friends in waiting outside.

Off in the Château de la Vernède, that same afternoon, Calisto was putting the finishing touches to the apartment which he had prepared for Adeline's reception. It was a prison, but he had striven to make it a beautiful prison. He had caused it to be fitted with the most sumptuous furniture that the Château contained, the richest carpets and laces and silks, and he had flooded it with balmy perfumes. Against one wall he had raised a little altar, adorned with wax candles and with flowers, on which he had placed the silver image of the Virgin from the house in the Rue de Bretagne—the very image before which Adeline and Lazuli had knelt in prayer. This altar was his master-stroke. He had taken infinite pains to make perfect its appointments. Before it he would stand with Adeline while Canon Jusserand performed the sacrament that made them man and wife.

These preparations being completely finished, Calisto devoted himself to making his own toilet. The sun still was high, he had ample leisure, and he was slow in choosing among the elegant garments which he brought

forth from the wardrobes and strewed about the room. When his choice at last was made, he brought a gold-stoppered bottle from the dressing table and scented his linen delicately with essence of jessamine. The subtle perfume seemed to go to his head. His blood leaped through his veins. His brain seemed to be on fire.

The waning sunlight recalled him to his senses a little and warned him that he must hurry. On his dressing-table, set in front of a big window that commanded the main avenue leading to the Château, he spread out his shaving apparatus and the heater and irons for curling his hair. He lathered his face, and shaved the half of it carefully—but the other half of his face did not get shaved that day! As he readjusted himself before the mirror he chanced to glance out of the window. Down at the far end of the avenue he saw a sight which made him drop his razor in a hurry, with a shrill cry of fear. Coming up the avenue at a gallop was a squad of mounted gendarmes!

There was not an instant for him to lose. Just as he was—in his shirt sleeves, with one half of his face covered with lather—he bolted. Racing down a back stair, through the offices of the Château and thence through the chicken-yard, he gained the forest. The gendarmes turned the whole place upside down, and had a regular *battue* in the forest afterward. But they did not find their game!

While the gendarmes searched vainly for Calisto in the forest round about Aramon, cer-

tain of his friends waited for him vainly in Avignon.

Night had come, and everybody was in readiness for the abduction of Adeline save the abductor in chief. Lou Pounchu and Rocofort, wearing the masks and dominos of the Carnival, were at their post beside the door on the Rue Porte-Evêque, key in hand. Near by, in the shadow cast by the ramparts, was a close carriage drawn by swift horses—all in order to go galloping off through the moonlit night to La Vernède. Inside the carriage was Canon Jusserand, ready to perform the marriage ceremony when they should be come to the Château.

As the time slipped away, and still Calisto came not, the Canon's emotions underwent a series of disagreeable changes—shifting from pleased anticipation to nervousness, from nervousness to anger, and from anger to a lively alarm. As for Lou Pounchu and Rocofort, the comments which they passed in whispers upon the situation became constantly of a more and more lurid and vigorous sort. All three of them realized that some untoward accident must have intervened to disarrange their carefully concerted plan; and they all knew that unless this accident should be set right very quickly their plan must fail. A main factor in their chances of success was the disorder of the last night of the Carnival—when the city was gaily turbulent; and when the city gates, carelessly guarded, were open until unusual hours. When quiet came, and when the gates were closed, they could do nothing. Quiet came all too quickly for them. The rattle of drums, beating the

lively measure of the farandole, grew less and less; the roar of voices diminished as the farandolers grew weary and went home to bed. Now and again would come an outburst from some belated company of revellers, reeling through one of the near-by streets, chanting the dirge of Carmentran:

Good-bye, poor soul!
Good-bye, poor soul!
Good-bye, poor Carmentran!

Before long even these scattered noises ceased. The only sound that broke the stillness of the night was the gurgle of the dark waters of the Sorgue—which came out from a black archway beneath the houses on the Rue Calade, ran in an open canal along the middle of the Rue Annanelle, and passed out through an archway beneath the ramparts to the Rhône. A foul stench came up from the canal through which these foul waters ran. All manner of vileness was there, including the dead bodies of animals. Not seldom the bodies of human beings were found there too—hacked to pieces beyond recognition. Murderers had a liking for the Sorgue.

Canon Jusserand knew that farther waiting was useless; that the night was too far advanced to permit the execution of their project, even though Calisto still should come. Very sorrowfully he leaned out from the window of the carriage and ordered the coachman to drive away. The coachman had risen to his feet and was staring hard at the archway through which the Sorgue passed beneath the ramparts. The

Canon also looked down at the archway, and saw two men there pushing at something with poles. "Are they murderers?" he asked in a low tone, while a shiver ran through him.

"Smugglers, more likely, Monsieur—trying to bring in a barrel of brandy."

"Equally sinners!" responded the Canon, who had a great respect for the law. "We will wait no longer," he added. "Drive home!"

As the carriage drove away, Lou Pounchu and Rocofort sulkily following it, the convent bell rang matins—pealing forth sweetly, joyfully, triumphantly, upon the stillness of the moonlit night.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

THE VEIL OF SAINT URSULA

At daybreak the bell rang gladly again, and then began within the convent a bustle of preparation for the Ash-Wednesday services and for the reception into the community of a new Sister. Later, the bustle within had its counterpart in a stir without. A bevy of gay young girls came with a big basket containing a muslin gown and a flowing veil of tulle, all white as the snow on Mont Ventour. After them came the pastry-cook from the Place du Change, bringing two great bags of sugared almonds—such as are thrown to the crowd at weddings in Provence. A group, that increased in numbers rapidly, assembled in waiting for the chapel door to be opened. In the front rank were Lazuli and Vauclair and Clairet in their Sunday clothes. They were the very first to come; and it was well that they came early, for five minutes after the door was opened the nave of the chapel was crammed full. Then came priests, canons, monks, abbés, and a company of little choir-boys in their little purple capes and their white albs. The chapel was like a hive of bees!

At last, to the accompaniment of a prodigious ringing of the convent bell, came his Lord-

ship the Bishop of Avignon. The gorgeous beadle struck his halberd three times on the stone pavement, the congregation knelt to receive the Episcopal blessing. Almost before they knew it, this part of the ceremonies was over—for the Lord Bishop, thin and nimble, went up the nave at such a rate that his pursy Vicar General could not keep pace with him; and he scattered his blessings to left and to right so briskly that they went flying about like little birds! Truly, Monseigneur Estève was not a show bishop, puffed up with pride in his own dignity. Good man that he was, he followed humbly in the steps of the Apostles. In his See of Avignon he was just what he had been in his little parish in the Var—where half the time he had to ring his own bell for the mass, and to light his own altar candles, and to take a hand in bearing the dead to their graves. In a twinkling he was at the altar, robed and mitred, and was intoning the Magnificat.

As the incense arose in a sweet-smelling cloud there was a little stir and rustle at the grating and the black curtain was drawn aside. Behind it, surrounded by the black-robed nuns, stood Adeline—radiant as the sun. In her white wedding dress, under her shimmering white veil, she was as lovely as Our Lady of Grace!

Throughout the chapel there was a stir. Every one turned to look at her. A fluttering sigh of admiration arose from the gazing crowd. Lazuli—although close to the grating, the closest of all to her—could not see her clearly, for Lazuli's eyes were dim with tears. Even Vauclair, the mustachioed sergeant who had done his gal-

lant share of fighting, had a great lump in his throat and was wiping his eyes with the back of his hand.

Monseigneur, candle in hand, advanced from the altar to the wicket in the grating and there recited the prayers for the ordination. Adeline stood before him tall and beautiful, and then knelt humbly as he put his stole upon her head. Her sweet voice sounded clearly through the chapel as she answered "Amen!"

The convent bell had been ringing blithely. The ringing ceased. Then, instead of its gay carillon, the bell tolled dismally. At that instant the Lord Bishop tore away the white veil and the crown of white flowers from Adeline's head and threw them aside. From a silver plate held by one of his attendants he took a pair of iron scissors and severed quickly, at the level of her shoulders, the two long plaits of her golden hair. As she heard the crisp sound of cutting she uttered a deep sigh and sank almost fainting upon her knees. The stillness in the chapel was broken by a choking sob from Lazuli, who was kneeling, utterly grief-stricken, her face buried in her hands. Vauclair knelt beside her —not since his first communion had he been upon his knees—weeping silently. In the choir arose the chant of the *miserere*. To the sound of its desolate lament the black curtain behind the grating was drawn. Monseigneur returned to the altar. The mass went on.

Little attention was given to the mass. Every one was waiting with unconcealed eagerness for the black curtain to be again drawn aside. Lazuli and Vauclair could not take their eyes from

the grating. Their hearts were breaking with the thought that when they saw Adeline again, in only a few moments more, she would be clad as a professed nun—separated forever from the world!

Clairet, being but a child, did not take the matter seriously. He had cried a little, partly because he did not like to see Adeline shut behind a grating, but more because his father and mother were crying and he was for keeping them company. But his eyes dried as he watched the conduct of the mass, and with most interest the part that the choir-boys took in it. To be a choir-boy must be very delightful, he thought—to wear a purple robe, and lace, and a red cap! And what fun it must be to swing a censer and send the sweet-smelling smoke flying all around! Oh, he would like that best of all!

Once more the convent bell rang out joyfully. To its glad sound the black curtain was drawn back disclosing Adeline standing at the wicket in the grating habited as a nun. Very lovely was her beautiful face under the fine white woollen veil, across her forehead a starched linen band; and the grace of her tall form was not lost wholly beneath the black robe. Beside her stood Mother Scholastica and Sister Margai, whom she had chosen to bear her company at her first communion in Saint Ursula's holy garb. When she and they had partaken, the office being celebrated by the Lord Bishop, the others followed until all had communed.

All save one! One nun, hidden in a corner, thrilling with a hopeless shame, dared not ap-

proach the holy table. It was Sister Dorothy—who all night long had waited impatiently for Calisto's coming, that she might give into his blood-stained hands this pure lily which now, by God's grace delivered from him, bloomed securely in the walled garden of the Lord!

When the ceremony was over, when Monseigneur and his attendants had partaken of the collation served to them by Sister Margai and had departed, when the crowd had left the chapel, the Vauclairs still lingered: for them there still was something more to do. Going to the great door of the convent, they passed to the parlour and there waited for Adeline's coming—that they might be the first, after those who were become her sisters, to give her words of loving cheer. It was the same room in which so often they had talked with her, but this time she could not come close to them and be clasped in their arms. When she appeared, clad in her habit, the double grating was between them. With their arms extended to the utmost, they barely could touch each others' hands.

For some moments none of them could speak. Their hearts were very full; and, in addition to her deep feeling, Adeline felt a curious shyness as she stood before her friends in a dress so strange to herself and to them. Lazuli perceived this shyness, and dealt with it in a womanly way. "What a charming nun," she cried. "Never would I have believed that the robe of Saint Ursula could be so becoming to you!"

"Really?" exclaimed Adeline joyfully.

"Really!" Lazuli answered. "If only you

could see yourself you would see how perfectly charming you are!"

Adeline was smiling with pleasure. "Is it really the truth that she is telling me, Vauclair?" she asked.

Vauclair could not speak easily. The lump was in his throat again. He gave a gulp and answered: "She is telling you the truth, Madame. You are as lovely as ever. No one could be more beautiful than you are!"

"Oh Vauclair, how can you speak to me so formally? Why do you call me 'Madame'? Am I not always your Adeline—your own child?"

"Yes, yes," cried Lazuli, "you are indeed our own child—as much our own child as Clairet, here, or Pascalet."

The smile faded from Adeline's face and her eyes filled with tears. "Oh Pascalet! Pascalet!" she exclaimed. "What would he say could he see me a nun! But oh, Father in heaven, forgive me for speaking his name! Never more may I think of him—save in my prayers. For him I may pray to my sweet Saint Christ—that He will guard him from the perils of war, that He will bring him home in safety to gladden his old mother's heart!"

"Come, come," said Vauclair. "Before long he'll be back again from the wars, safe and sound. And then I'll bring him here to see you. For that I give you my word."

"Ahem!" came a little short dry cough that made them all start. It came from behind the curtain, and was uttered by an old and rather particular nun whose business it was to keep the

talk between the Sisters and their visitors within due bounds.

Adeline understood the signal and blushed a little. Crushing down the pain that was in her heart, she changed the subject by saying to Clairet: "And you also, Clairet, must come to see me when the others come."

"Yes, Madame," Clairet answered, speaking shyly and with downcast eyes.

"What, 'Madame' from you too? Why, Clairet, I'm your sister—your sister Adeline. You must not call me 'Madame'!" Her heart was wrenched as she realized how these her dear friends, whom she loved so tenderly, suddenly seemed to be far away from her—and at the very moment when she needed most their close affection and support. By a quick impulse she grasped the grating as though she would tear it away! In a moment she had conquered herself and was calm again.

As Clairet was too shy to answer her, she continued: "You must not be afraid of me, my Clairet. Come, look at me! And, see! Even if you have grown to be a big boy I am sure that you still like nice things, and I have some for you. To-day is the great festival of my life. To-day I take the veil that marries me to Jesus!" Her voice broke into a sob and she trembled. Again she steadied herself, and added—while she searched in her unfamiliar dress for her pocket: "You must have some of the sugared almonds that are a part of my wedding feast. Ah, here they are. I brought them on purpose for you." As she spoke, she drew from her pocket a packet tied daintily with white and

blue ribbons and handed it to Clairet through the bars.

"Benedicamus Domino" came in a low voice from behind the curtain. It was the signal that the interview must end.

"Deo gratias," Adeline answered obediently.

Her hand, outstretched through the grating, met and pressed each of their outstretched hands in turn. "Adessias!" she said. "Adessias!" they answered. And so she left them.

While they could hear the clicking of her rosary and the sound of her retreating footsteps, they stood listening in sad silence. Then, still with hearts too full for speech, they went homeward to the Place du Grand Paradis.

CHAPTER XXXIX

SLOW-PASSING YEARS

SISTER ADELINE took up the burden of her convent life and bore it bravely. She who, as a child, had shared her bread with little Pascalet, was filled with a sweet spirit of charity—that made her zealous to serve with her whole strength and eager to minister to the happiness of those about her. She did her share, and more than her share, of the convent work; she nursed tenderly the sick; even to Sister Dorothy, at her rough toil in the kitchen, she lent a helping hand. In her seemed to live again Saint Ursula's spirit of helpfulness and self-sacrifice.

Her one concession to herself was her half hour, each Sunday, with the Vauclairs. Never did they fail to come to her, bringing always some little gift—a melon, a big pear, a bunch of grapes—that was not a trifling gift because it was charged with their love. The visits of these dear friends gave her a deep happiness, and a deeper happiness because she could talk with them about Pascalet. Always they spoke of him cheerfully—of his coming back to Avignon a tall and gallant mustachioed soldier whom at first sight they would not know. But always with their cheerful talk went an undercurrent of doubt and dread—as they thought of what

might have happened to him among the many evil chances of war. These talks, independently of the boding thoughts that went with them, left Adeline with a soul so disturbed—so thrilling with hopeless memories and with still more hopeless longings—that she could win her way to calm again only by earnest beseeching in prayer. Always her prayers ended, as did those which she said night and morning, with the appeal: "Sweet Saint Ursula, quench the fire that burns my poor heart, but grant that once more I may see him before I die!"

For the dwellers in the outer world in that stirring epoch time passed quickly; but for Sister Adeline, shut in her convent, striving always to keep a dead hope buried in its grave the march of those great years was despairing slow. And with their lingering weariness wi pain. Every time that the bells of Avign rang out for a fresh victory, and they rang the hope arose in her heart that they were ri ing for peace—and so for her Pascalet's hor coming. Always this hope was false. As perished, always would come the cruel und thought: "Perhaps in that great battle he w killed!"

But Pascalet was not killed. As a grenadi of the Guard his old luck stood by him and t bullets did him no harm. With the army Bonaparte he marched triumphant, as he ha marched with the army of the Republic; in h breast burned always the flame for Liberty Equality, Fraternity; his strong arm helped carry forward the tri-colour, and with it t Banner of the Rights of Man; his voice in ba

ıe "Marseillaise." He did not forget
ıe. She had his heart—but his honour
ı stand fast by the colours of France.
the French flag went, he went: over
ɔwy steeps of Mont Saint Bernard, across
idge of Arcola, through the burning heat
e Egyptian desert; then back to Europe
ı, in time to plant the tri-colour on the bell-
er of Marengo at the cost of a desperate
e-slash across his forehead; then to Austria
where he, who had danced on the day that
ıe Tuileries were stormed in the bed-chamber
f the Austrian woman, boiled his bit of meat
ı Vienna beneath the walls of the Imperial
ɔalace; and so onward to the heroic day of Austerlitz—when the shadow cast by the Great Army of France extended from the olive-orchards of Italy in the South to the pine-grown slopes of the Urals in the frozen North!

And while he marched triumphant the bells of Avignon rang out for the victories that he helped to win—and in an Avignon convent one in sore trouble prayed: "Sweet Saint Ursula, quench the fire that burns my poor heart, but grant that once more I may see him before I die!"

As Adeline bent over her work, in the hours of silence, often did she neglect to recite to herself her rosary—while her thoughts wandered far afield to Pascalet, trying to picture him in her mind. Could she have made her picture true to life she would have been well pleased with it. Her little Pascalet had grown to be tall and strong, as strong as an ash tree on the flanks of Mont Ventour. His face, bronzed by

the sun of Egypt, had become resolut
more resolute because of the gallant s
his brow. His clear honest black eye
with dancing specks of gold. His curl
tache had grown bravely, hiding his lar
red lips. Two long tresses of dark hair
down at the sides of his face to his shou
In a word, he had become the very handso
soldier in the Emperor's Guard! It was
surprising, when he served in Spain, that
maidens of Zaragoza smiled upon him as
passed beneath their balconies; that they too
the rosebuds from between their lips and threw
them to him with a kiss!

many
ntly

But Adeline could not create a true picture of him in her mind; and to create any picture of him that at all satisfied her grew more and more difficult as the months and the years went by with a leaden slowness—while the storm of victory tossed him hither and thither about Europe, but never toward his home.

In that great time the armies of France, which had been the soul of the Revolution, went and came from one end of the continent to the other—from the Rhine to the Danube, from the Danube to the Guadalquivir—turning up the old world as the soil is turned up by the ploughman as he ploughs among the vines. In a single year Napoleon's white horse quenched his thirst in the grey waters of the Spree, in the muddy waters of the Danube, in the sparklingly clear waters of the Ebro!

When Napoleon's gigantic task was accomplished, when the last cannon had thundered, when the last spark had flashed from the sabres

French cavalry, the Corsican Emperor—
ıe soul was that of a corsair—still was
ısfied. Seated upon his white horse, he
ı for an enemy to crush, for a capital to
, for a crown to strike off. But before him
behind him and around him was only a
ı plain. From the west to the east the har-
was complete. Everywhere, duly bound
ı set in order, lay the reaped sheaves. Be-
ıd his white horse crouched dukes, arch-
kes, princes, kings, emperors, even he who
ore the triple tiara—and his white horse
/itched their faces with his tail. In his saddle-
s were the fourteen sceptres of those who
. been kings!

Then it was that he, the son of the Revolu-
ın, he who had been the friend of Robespierre,
t shame of his own origin and turned traitor.
ıen it was that he took in marriage the daugh-
r of one of his conquered emperors; that upon
ance—the France of the Revolution that had
ılt justice to Marie Antoinette—he imposed
rie Louise, another Austrian of the tyrant
ıod, as Empress!

From that time onward the Great Army of
ınce, the army, stern and terrible, born of the
ɔublic of 1792, the army of Valmy and Je-
ppes—no longer fought for Liberty, for Equal-
, for Fraternity; no longer bore through the
ɔrld the Banner of the Rights of Man. From
ıt time onward the Great Army of France was
defend beneath the tri-colour all the bare-
ɔted tramps who had become barons and
ıkes and princes; and, alas! grown drunk
/ith the fumes of victory and blinded by the

rays of glory, that army which had crushed a king-tyrant was to perish for an emperor-tyrant!

Into the huge maelstrom of fighting the youth of France was carried down. Levées *en masse* came again and again, calling to the colours even lads of no more than sixteen years. Clairet did not wait for the conscription. A brave boy and a good patriot, as his father had been before him, he was eager to pay his blood-debt to his mother-land. When the force was massing for the campaign in Russia, off he went as a volunteer. And then, presently, the bells of Avignon rang for new victories—for Smolensk, where Marshal Ney, the son of a cooper, became a prince; a little later for the fall of Moscow.

In those days the Vauclairs were sad-hearted when they paid their Sunday visits to Adeline, and they were less ready to talk about Pascalet than about their own boy—far away in that Russia so cruelly cold. But one Sunday when they came to her—not a very long while after the Moscow victory had been celebrated—they had little to say even about Clairet, so full were they of matters of importance close at home.

What had happened no one seemed to know certainly; but it was quite certain that rumours of disaster to the French army were flying about thickly, and that on the strength of these rumours the Whites were showing themselves as they had not shown themselves for years. The next day Adeline had further evidence that the order of things was changing. Canon Jusserand, who for a very long time had not entered the con-

vent, paid a visit of full two hours to Sister Dorothy—and went away with a smile of satisfaction on his old face, as though he had been imparting to her information of an exceptionally pleasing sort. That night the nuns heard a great shouting in the streets of "Down with the Blues! Long live the King!"

CHAPTER XL

ONCE MORE WHITE TERROR REIGNS

EVEN in her convent shelter Adeline felt the eddying of the whirlwind that then was loosed upon France: that brought into the land conquering foreign armies, that crushed the tyrant Emperor, that raised the tyrant King to the throne once more, that cast him down again, that brought back the Emperor for the Hundred Days. These great events which convulsed France with passion had their passionate echo in Avignon. In Avignon the Whites once more gained the ascendency, and once more White Terror reigned!

News of these great happenings the Vauclairs brought to Adeline when they paid her their weekly visits. Suddenly—this was after the Hundred Days began—their visits stopped, and a quick thrill of dread for their safety came into her heart. When a second Sunday passed without their coming to her, her anxiety was more than she could bear. She besought Sister Margai, the lay Sister who was free to go out from the convent, to get news for her of these her friends; and Sister Margai—well knowing that the rules of the Order expressly forbade such service, and that in doing it she fell into sin—consented to Adeline's request. "Saint

Ursula will forgive me," she said to herself, "and the confessional will clear my sin away."

When she was come back again from her mission—that was accomplished while she was supposed to be doing the convent marketing—the look on her face told that she brought black news. Breaking still another rule of the Order, Adeline drew her within her cell and bolted the door. "What has happened?" she asked eagerly, but with a thrill of fear in her tone.

"Dreadful things have happened!" Sister Margai answered. "The Whites are farandoling away all over the city. The windows and balconies are full of white flags. All the poor Reds, all the poor soldiers coming back home from the wars, are being murdered!" Great drops of sweat were on her forehead. She was very pale. She paused for a moment to fan herself with her apron. Then she added: "Oh poor Lazuli! Oh poor Vauclair!"

Adeline also was very pale. "What has happened to them?" she asked. "Did you see them? Answer me, Sister Margai. Answer me quickly!"

"No, I did not see them. Their house is locked up and deserted. I knocked, but no one came. And then, as I was coming away—back through the Place des Grands Carmes—I saw something that was terrible. First I heard what sounded like the shrieks of women and children. Then I saw a lot of men running, carrying the white flag. Then I saw—oh God in heaven!—a crowd that filled the whole width of the street: men foaming at the mouth, yelling and howling, their eyes starting out of their heads. Some of

them were dragging something along on the ground, and others of them were beating that dragged thing with clubs. They came on, straight toward me, and I was shoved on one side and pushed against the wall. Then I saw the awful thing that they were doing. They were dragging along the body of a dead soldier —a soldier they had killed in the Porte Saint-Lazare, just as the poor innocent was coming into the city. The body was being knocked out of all shape as they hammered at it with their clubs. Along where it passed it left a trail of blood. As they beat it they yelled 'To the Rhône! To the Rhône!' And then they began to shout: 'To the Place du Grand Paradis!' A gentleman seemed to be leading them —a gentleman dressed in a fine blue coat with lace cuffs and carrying a yellow cane with a silver handle. He shouted, and the crowd of murderers shouted after him: 'Long live the King!'

"After they had passed, and I was standing there shaking like a reed, there came hobbling along a horrible little old lame woman. 'Aha, did you see him?' she said with a chuckle that froze my blood. 'That's the way they're all to go—every one of them, every single one! We'll revenge our good King!'

"'Who was it?' I asked, all in a tremble.

"'Don't you know?' said she. 'Why, that's the son of that good-for-nothing jade in the Place du Grand Paradis—the one who went up to Paris with her husband to guillotine our good King. Now they're served out for what they did. It's her son, just back from Bonaparte's army, that we've killed!'"

Adeline gave a cry of horror, but Sister Margai had more to tell. "The lame little old woman caught sight of the blood-stains on the stones and beat them with her stick. Then she went limping away, crying out: 'I'm off to see what they're doing in the Place du Grand Paradis. Our Monsieur le Comte de la Vernède, who's at the head of everything, has promised us that before nightfall the Rhône shall be carrying the father and the mother, along with the son, beyond the bridge of Trinquetaille. Oh, there's rare sport afoot! And to-morrow we're going to cut the tongue out of one of Bonaparte's generals who's coming here. Rare sport, I say —rare sport!' And she hobbled away."

"Oh holy saints in heaven!" cried Adeline. "It is Clairet, my dear little Clairet whom they have killed! And it is the false Comte de la Vernède, it is Calisto, who is doing this—who is killing the brave soldiers. Oh Sister Margai, pray with me, pray with me to our own Saint Ursula, that Pascalet may not fall into the hands of those murderers! And I, who every day for years have prayed that he might be brought back here and my eyes given sight of him once more, will pray that he may be kept away from this accursed land—away from this Calisto whom God permits to live on in crime!"

"Ah," said Sister Margai, "if our brave soldiers who come back from the wars to be killed in their homes had only Calisto and his wretches to reckon with, the end soon would come. But he is only one of the many evil doers who spread terror throughout the land. In the mountains between Malemort and Bédoin is Pastour's

band—that mercilessly kills the Reds and plunders and burns their homes. Round about Arles is the Syphonier's band, that casts the Reds and the poor soldiers into the Rhône. And Trestaillon's band, over by Nîmes, is the worst of all. There are hundreds and thousands of them, and they sack and ravage everywhere, and without pity they throw Reds and soldiers and Huguenots all together into the flames!"

"Oh Sister Margai," moaned Adeline, "these times are worse than the time of terror that kept us hidden in the cave—the time when our good priest Monsieur Randoulet was lost to us."

"Worse!" echoed Sister Margai. "Indeed they are worse! Our butcher has just come back from the fair at Uzès, and what he told me made my blood run cold. He said that some of Trestaillon's men came murdering to the farm of Chambaud, near Aramon. They found the farmer's wife alone in the house, and they seized her and asked her if she was a good Catholic. The poor woman, ready to drop with fear, said that she was. 'Very well then,' they said, 'prove it by saying your paternoster and your Ave Maria.' They held their knives at her heart, and of course she was too scared to say a word. 'Oh, so you're lying,' they said—and in a moment they had stabbed her to death! The farm servant, at work in the garden, heard the noise and came in to see what was the matter. They seized him and asked him if he were a Catholic or a Huguenot. He said that he was a Huguenot. 'Then you shall die for it,' they said, and killed

him too. Then they set fire to the farm-house and came away.

"Our butcher told me," Sister Margai went on, "that when he was in Uzès he saw Trestaillon himself—his real name's not Trestaillon, it's Dupont—and some of his men with him: one named Graffan, and one they call Quatre-taillons, and some more. And our butcher saw them fetch out of the prison at Uzès five Huguenot Liberals who had been shut up there for their own safety, and drag them along to the front of the Bishop's Palace and there murder them—and the King's Sous-préfet all the while looking on! Then, in mockery, Trestaillon propped them up on their knees, with their faces toward Nîmes, and put spectacles on their noses—and then jeered at them: 'Do you see help coming from the Gard?'"

Adeline only partly listened to Sister Margai's stories of horrors. In her heart was bitter grief for the dead Clairet, and bitter dread that already Vauclair and Lazuli might be dead also; and a still keener fear beset her as she thought of her Pascalet's peril should he chance—as was only too likely—to come back to Avignon in that wild time. And then, suddenly, Jacquemart began to sound the tocsin, and almost in the same moment they heard a great outcry in the street and shouts of "Death! Death to him! To the Rhône! To the Rhône!"

They could see nothing. They could only hear. There was the angry roar of a crowd. The trampling of horses' feet. Louder cries of "Death to him!" and "To the Rhone!" Then the shrill singing, in which the voices of

women and children joined, of the song of the White Terror:

"No one shall we spare!
So Trestaillon commands.
Our knives make the law!
Long live the King!
All the brigands shall die!
Long live the Queen!"

Then a strong voice shouted loud above the tumult: "To the Rhône with him! To the Rhône with the sans-culotte who carried the head of our Princesse de Lamballe on his pike!" And then the crowd passed on, and the noises grew fainter and fainter.

With white faces and with wildly beating hearts the two nuns gazed at each other with wide open terrified eyes. It seemed to them that they had been listening to the cries of devils let loose on earth to do the work of hell!

And it was the work of hell that was done by that crowd, presently, on the Place of the Porte de l'Oulle. There, in the broad daylight of an August sun, in the name of the King and in the presence of the King's officers with the King's Préfet at their head, that crowd of thousands of Royalists—impudent cowards, led by a coward clad in a blue coat and carrying a silver-headed cane—compassed the death of a Marshal of France! And, be it noted, this Marshal of France was a valiant soldier of the Empire, who for twenty years had braved the cannon-balls of the Prussians and the Austrians in the defence of his country and of Liberty. He was one of the heroes of Arcola, he was the

conqueror of Holland, he was the terror of the foreigner—he was Marshal Brune!

Yet it did not come easily, this killing. Consent to it was given by the Juge d'Instruction, one Piot (may his name be held in shame!), a wolf-faced man, who sat on the fender-stone in the Porte de l'Oulle quietly waiting to draw up a procès-verbal when the crime had been committed; and consent to it was given by the Procureur du Roi, one Verger (may his name be held in shame!), a fox-headed monster, who passed and repassed through the crowd, eager to insult the dead body of the Marshal and to shield his murderers. Yet, in spite of this official sanction, in spite of this strange mingling of law with lawlessness, no one seemed to have courage enough to attack the brave soldier. Jallès had not—the treacherous postillion who forcibly brought him from Orgon to Avignon. Goulier had not—the man who snatched away his plume with the sneer: "You are a brigand, unworthy to wear a marshal's plume!" Calisto had not—the man who had given currency to the lie that Marshal Brune had carried on a pike the head of the Princesse de Lamballe. In all that horde of Royalists—from the Préfet, Saint-Chamans (may his name be held in shame!), to the poorest of the fanatical Royalist shop-keepers and silk-weavers—there were to be found but three wretches who were brave enough to commit the crime.

These three were Lou Pounchu, Farge, and Grindon, called Rocofort—all of Trestaillon's band. They were the better able to accomplish the work to which they set themselves because

they were frequenters of the inn of the Palais Royal, into which Marshal Brune had shut himself. Knowing the interior arrangement of the house, they knocked a hole through the floor of the room above that in which he was, and so reached him. But before the piercing glance of the hero those who faced him stopped thunderstruck. Lou Pounchu so trembled that his finger could not draw the trigger of his piece. Farge fired his pistol, but aimed so badly that the ball merely grazed the Marshal—who, calm as he had been on the bridge of Arcola, said coolly: "What awkwardness!" Barely had he uttered these words when Rocofort, who had stolen behind him, fired a ball into the back of his head—and Marshal Brune fell forward, a dead man! As he fell, the three ran to the window, flourishing their still smoking pieces, and cried to the crowd below: "Justice has been done! Long live the King!"

The maddened crowd fell to dancing a farandole, and at the same time sang loudly:

"No one shall we spare!
So Trestaillon commands.
Our knives make the law!
Long live the King!"

Others of the crowd—mainly women, Papalins, Royalists, rich bourgeois—shouted out a doggerel verse that somebody on the spur of the moment improvised:

"A wide-awake angel
Put in his gun
The excellent prune
That killed Marshal Brune!"

At the sound of the shots, the Juge d'Instruction rose from his seat in the Porte de l'Oulle, his portfolio under his arm. Accompanied by the Procureur du Roi, and followed by a crowd of thieves and murderers, he entered the inn and went to the room in which the dead body lay. There, with ink that was the scum of lies and hypocrisies, he drew up a false procès-verbal which declared that the Marshal had blown out his brains with his own hand. In the presence of these officers of the law, the crowd rifled the pockets of the dead Marshal, tore off his gold sword-knot, and insulted his body.

When the procès-verbal was finished, the two officers left the body in the fierce custody of the crowd—and then was to be seen a dead Marshal of France dragged shamefully through the streets of Avignon! Papalists, Royalists, emigrés, deserters, allies of the Prussian and of the Austrian, robbers, murderers, crowded around the body and larded it with their knives. At last they carried it to the river—and there, over the parapet of the bridge that had been the scene of many a gay farandole, they tossed the body of a Marshal of France, mangled but still noble, into the Rhône!

CHAPTER XLI

SANCTUARY

TREMBLING with fear, Adeline and Sister Margai had cast themselves on their knees before the crucifix. There they remained, uttering broken prayers, while that foul murder was done. Faintly they could hear the shouts and yells from the crowd. At the sound of the firing they shivered and crossed themselves. Suddenly, with less volume, the noise grew sharper and clearer. They heard fewer voices, but the voices were drawing nearer to them rapidly. They could make out the trampling of feet. In another moment the crowd had turned the corner and was in their own street. The shouts ceased to be a confused roar and became distinct words: "Kill him! Kill the brigand! To the Rhône with him! To the Rhône!"

The two nuns had risen to their feet and were listening—breathless, terrified. Their terror was increased tenfold when, along with the shouting, came a violent banging at the convent door. It was an irregular knocking, as though made with clubs or stones, but so loud that it rang through the corridors and set the windows to rattling. With it came a clatter of bolts, as the frightened Sisters fastened themselves into their cells. Adeline turned a dead white, and

again fell upon her knees before the crucifix. She fancied that she heard the voice of Calisto. The dreadful thought came to her that he meant to break into the convent and to carry her off by force!

To Sister Margai came another thought: that the one whom the crowd was bent upon killing was beating at the door of their convent in the hope of finding refuge there. She also was a dead white and was shaking with terror. But stronger than her terror was her brave sense of duty. She was the porteress of the convent. It was her duty to respond to that knocking by opening the door. Sister Margai crossed herself and said a little prayer. Then, holding the cross of her rosary in her hand, she went along the corridor—past the fast shut doors—to the stair, and down the stair to the door. Shaking with fear and upheld by courage, she took down the bar and shot back the bolts. Then she opened the door, saying tremblingly: "Benedicamus Domino!"

Sister Margai had a glimpse of the howling and roaring crowd over on the other side of the street—cut off by the canal of the Sorgue from their prey. But it was only a glimpse. As the door swung open a soldier—bloody, dizzy, half-fainting—pitched forward bodily into her arms. In an instant she had managed to drag him inside; and then, leaving him lying anyhow, she clapped to the door and made it fast again with bolt and bar.

For some moments, panting hard, she stood listening. "Will they try to break in?" she thought, in an agony of dread. But the crowd

of men—as fickle as they were cruel—gave up the chase. Had they caught the soldier whom they had been stoning they would have made short work of him—not only because of the uniform that he wore, but because he had raised his voice bravely against the foul murder of Marshal Brune. But since they had not caught him, since the Sisters had seen fit to give him shelter, off they went again—hurrying to join their fellows who were dragging the Marshal's body about the streets of Avignon before they tossed it into the Rhône.

Sister Margai would have been not a little embarrassed at finding herself of a sudden alone in the convent vestibule with a strange man, and a soldier at that, had not the poor strange man so evidently and so urgently needed her aid—as he lay quite still where she had dropped him, the blood streaming from a gash in his forehead where he had been cut by a stone. Therefore, thinking only of how she could get her broken man mended again, she set herself to ministering to his needs.

His first need, clearly, was to be lifted out of the heap in which he was lying on the floor and to be laid upon something that would enable him to rest comfortably; therefore she managed being as strong of body as she was stout of heart to drag him into the convent parlour and to get him upon a straw-covered sofa; where he could bleed as much as he pleased, she thought to herself, without making a mess that wouldn't easily wash up again. He revived a little as she propped his head on the sofa and looked up at her gratefully with a pair of very handsome

black eyes. "Thank you, holy Sister," he said in a weak voice. "Don't bother about me. I'll be all right again presently."

"Now do you lie there without stirring till I come back," Sister Margai commanded. "I'll make you as comfortable as it's possible to make you, you poor soul!" And away she dashed for cold water and clean rags, and for orange-flower water to refresh her poor soldier with when she had washed and tied up his wound. All the cell doors still were shut fast and bolted, but her isolation was not painful at all. In a twinkling, with both hands full, she was back again beside her wounded man.

"Here I am," she said with great cheerfulness. "Now keep quiet while I wash away all this dreadful blood. Heavens, what a cut it is!"

The soldier smiled faintly. "I've known worse cuts than this, holy Sister—very much worse. Why, this is only a scratch! Give me the basin, please. I'm nearly all right now. I'll wash away the blood myself."

"Indeed you won't do any such thing!" Sister Margai said decidedly. "You'll lie perfectly still, just as you are, and you'll let me attend to it!" And, suiting her action to her words, she began to wash away the blood from his forehead very tenderly—refreshing him not more with the cool water than with the kindly touch of her soft hand. As she fingered the torn flesh, setting it in place, it was she, not the soldier, who winced and cried "Ai!"

The young fellow laughed a little, by way of putting heart into her. "You see," he said,

"it's an old wound that that dog of a Royalist has dug open again with his stone. I had a sabre-cut there once that made a good deal of a mess—and would have made a worse mess if my head hadn't been so jolly hard!"

His laugh, and his stronger voice, and the mocking note in his words, united to comfort Sister Margai amazingly. Evidently, he had a lot of life left in him. Fears on his behalf were quite superfluous. All that he needed to make him sound again was a little care. In giving him this care she found a rather perilous self-satisfaction. All blood-stained, she had thought him handsome—she thought him still handsomer when she had finished her tenderly gentle washing and the blood was gone. A little unruly thrill stirred the heart of this good Sister as she looked from under her eye-lashes at her soldier whose life she had saved: at his fine strong face, set off by long plaits of hair falling to his shoulders and by a strong mustache, and most of all by a pair of dancing black eyes! And how very becoming to him, she thought, was his uniform of a grenadier of the Guard, with its white gaiters and its gallant red epaulettes! Her fingers tingled as she touched him. And her touch was so very gentle as to be dangerously close to a caress!

"Sister Margai! Sister Margai!" she said to herself sharply, "this won't do at all! You are giving pain to the good God! See to it that you punish yourself. To-night, after matins, you must have a dose of the seven-knotted scourge!" So steadying herself, she set about binding her soldier's wound with fine linen. Now that the

blood was gone the scar on his forehead showed plainly. "Mon Dieu!" she cried. "What a dreadful sword-cut that must have been! The scar goes all the way across!"

"The Emperor said to me," the soldier answered, his eyes brightening, "that a scar like that is a star of the brave!"

"Oh," exclaimed Sister Margai, "to think of that! To think that the Emperor himself has spoken to you!" She was so overcome by the honour that had been done to her soldier that she finished binding up his wound without uttering another word. He lay quite still—as a good child ministered to by its mother—while she set the bandage in place closely and firmly, and smiled gratefully as she ended by smoothing back his hair. "Now you shall have a glass of orange-flower water," she said. "It will refresh you and do you good."

As the soldier took the glass from her hand and raised himself on one elbow to drink, he glanced inquiringly around the room. "Thank you," he said as he gave back to her the empty glass, "that was delicious. And now will you tell me, holy Sister, where I am? What is that double grating, with a black curtain behind it? Am I by chance in a prison?"

"Oh no, no!" Sister Margai answered. "Of course you're not in a prison! You are in God's own house—in a convent of cloistered nuns, whom you may not see, but who will take good care of you until you are quite well again and can go on your way!"

"My good Sister, do you think I mean to sit here until the silk-worms are grown up?

You've put me in capital order, and I'm very much obliged to you—but now I must be off after those rascals who have murdered my Marshal Brune."

"You want to go back into that crazy crowd? Good heavens, you must be crazy yourself! You mustn't even dream of such a thing! What you are to do is to stay here quietly until your wound begins to heal. Then, when you are fit to go about again, you can slip away some night and be off safely to your home."

The soldier was not by any means disposed to accept this programme which Sister Margai so authoritatively laid down for him. But he found—when he tried to stand, and suddenly grew dizzy and had to lie down again in a hurry—that he should have to accept it, at least in part. The bleeding from the cut in his forehead had been prodigious, and had left him very weak indeed. "I believe I must rest here a little longer," he said in a grumbling tone. "To think," he added, "that one of the Emperor's marshals should be murdered, and that I shouldn't be able to raise a hand!"

Sister Margai was able to accept the situation quite resignedly. "Now promise me that you'll be good, that you won't move," she said. "I must go and tell our reverend Mother Superior about your being here—but I won't be gone long. Now don't you move!" And off she went to tell her wonderful piece of news. She was very eager to tell it, yet was she also rather anxious about the reception that would be given to it. What she had done, though for the saving of

human life, was a glaring infraction of a most serious rule!

Naturally, her report caused a very lively stir in the Sisterhood. "Heavens!" cried a devout old nun. "A man in our convent!"

"And a soldier!" exclaimed another, crossing herself.

"And a brigand!" snarled Sister Dorothy, shaking her fist.

But Mother Scholastica, being merciful and abounding in charity, took a broader view of the matter. "God will bless you for what you have done, Sister Margai," she said earnestly; "and what God blesses I cannot ban. There can be no harm in breaking a rule of our convent if in that way a man's life can be saved. And you must continue your ministrations, Sister. If he needs nourishment, give it to him. He must be made strong enough to get on to his home. Is his home here in Avignon, do you know?"

"No, I don't think he lives here in Avignon. He's a soldier just come here from the Emperor's army, but I don't think this is his home."

"Didn't you ask him his name?" questioned Adeline.

"Ask him his name! Goodness me! I had enough to do to wash the blood off and bind up his wound. It didn't come into my head that he had a name—though I suppose he has."

Adeline drew Mother Scholastica a little aside and spoke to her eagerly. "Reverend Mother," she said, "perhaps that soldier may have known little Pascalet and may be able to give me news of him. Will you not take me to the grating that I may ask?"

"Hush, my child," the Mother Superior answered, "to-day it is too late—we must go now and recite the office for nones. But to-morrow, after the holy mass, during the time for recreation, you shall come with me to the grating. Then we will get him to tell us about himself, and we will ask him for news of the little soldier from Malemort."

Some of the other Sisters had drawn near and heard the Mother Superior's concluding words. At once there was an outcry of "And me too!" "And me too, Reverend Mother!" "Let us all go and hear what the poor soldier has to tell!" And in the end Mother Scholastica, to whom refusing a favour did not come easily, gave her consent that they all should take part in the adventure. "But remember, Sisters," she said, "while you may hear him you may not see him. We shall stand at the grating, but the curtain shall not be drawn. We must not set our great Saint Ursula to weeping up in heaven because the sin of curiosity is rife among her nuns!"

Just then—jingle, jingle-jingle! rang the little bell for nones. Off sped the nuns to their cells to recite the office, scattering like a flock of sparrows frightened by the discharge of a gun.

Adeline's mind was so full of the soldier from whom she might be able to get news of Pascalet that she sadly bungled her prayers. Nor could she close her eyes the whole night long. Over and over she framed the questions that she would ask in the morning. Over and over she conjured up visions of Pascalet himself. Always her vision was the same: of Pascalet as

she last had seen him, on that far-back day in Paris when he had said good-bye to her at the Planchots' and had gone off to the barracks to draw his pay. She knew that he must have changed greatly, but how he had changed she could not know at all. And so her only certain picture of him was the one that lived in her memory: of a bright-eyed stripling whose laughing face was as smooth as the face of a girl.

CHAPTER XLII

A GRENADIER OF THE EMPEROR'S GUARD

WHEN, at last, the morning angelus rang, Adeline was up and dressed in a moment. Then, very quietly, she opened her door a crack and waited for the coming of the porteress. Presently Sister Margai began her morning round —knocking at the door of each cell and calling "Benedicamus Domino!" and receiving a drowsy "Deo gratias!" in reply. Adeline also answered "Deo gratias!"—but opened her door and in a low voice asked hurriedly: "Tell me, Sister, did the soldier say anything to you about Pascalet?"

"No," Sister Margai answered, "he didn't. But I think it likely he's met him, for that young man seems to have made a point of going to every battle that ever was fought. It's heavenly to hear him tell about 'em! You feel as if you were right in 'em yourself!" And Sister Margai went on down the corridor with her "Benedicamus Domino!"—rousing the Sisters for the morning service of the mass.

To Adeline that mass seemed interminable. The worthy Monsieur Péru—their almoner in the place of Monsieur Jusserand—was a truly holy man, but at all times his slowness was marvellous. On that particular morning it was

almost miraculous. While he said his "Dominus vobiscum" there was time enough to kill a donkey with fisticuffs! Adeline fretted and twisted and turned. It seemed as though he never would get to the end!

At last, somehow, he managed to arrive at his "Ita missa est"—and the dismissed Sisters hastened thankfully to the refectory and ate their light morning meal in a scamper, being only less eager than Adeline to hear what their soldier had to tell. Then the whole community—excepting Sister Dorothy, who refused to have anything whatever to do with "the brigand"—flocked in the wake of Mother Scholastica to the convent parlour and ranged themselves, with a soft rustling of robes and a little clicking of rosaries, behind the black curtain that veiled the bars. The Mother Superior's command was stringent that no one but herself should speak to their guest. A flutter went through the gentle-hearted company as this most exciting interview began.

"God be with you, brave soldier," said Sister Scholastica. "How is your wound to-day?"

"God be with you, holy Sister," the soldier answered in a cheerful voice. "My wound is doing very well indeed. You must not worry about it at all."

"We will pray to God, and to our holy Saint Ursula, to make your cure speedy and to bring you quickly to your own home."

"Well, I'm not familiar with Saint Ursula, though I dare say she's obliging. But God knows me, and twice he has worked a miracle in my behalf."

At this there was a little buzz of admiration among the nuns as they whispered to each other: "Oh, what a worthy soldier!" "Oh, what an excellent young man!" Adeline's eyes were full of tears and her heart was in a tumult. She was not thinking about the soldier's display of piety; she was thinking only that he might have known, and that in a moment or two more he might be giving her news of her Pascalet!

"Indeed, I may say—counting this last one—that God has worked three miracles for me," the soldier continued. He had heard the murmur of approval called forth by his pious words and was disposed to intensify the good impression that he was making. "The first one was more than twenty years ago in Paris, and the second was less than three years ago among the snows of Russia, and the third was right here yesterday—when your good Sister Margai opened the door just in time to save me from being stoned to death by the assassins of Marshal Brune."

Again there was a buzz of approbation, in the midst of which Mother Scholastica said: "Then you have been in close peril of death three times, and a kind Father in heaven has ——"

"Three times!" the soldier interrupted. "It is more like a hundred times that I have felt blowing on me the chill wind of death! It is the duty of a grenadier of the Emperor's Guard, you must remember, to meet death a good deal more than half-way; to get into the places where the cannon-balls and the bullets are

thickest—as they were that day at Waterloo when we marched through the fire of eighty thousand Englishmen under Wellington on one side of us and of a hundred thousand Prussians under Blücher on the other side of us, at the battle of Mont Saint Jean. Under that cross-fire we had to go through the famous hawthorn hedge and take the farm-house beyond it by assault. If I didn't die then, my Sisters, I don't see how I ever can die. Just let me tell you about it, and you'll think so too.

"You see, the hedge was a huge one, very high and very wide. In an orchard behind it the English were hidden by thousands, and as we came down on them they fought like lions and tigers—for they knew that to kill every man of us was the only way to stop a charge of the grenadiers of the Guard. When we got to within twenty paces or so of the hedge each separate leaf and flower of it seemed to be spitting fire at us. Down its whole length was a glare, as dazzling as lightning, that almost blinded us as we halted to pour in a volley and then went on again steadily. Just then I glanced backward, and instantly was filled with shame —for up on the hill of La Belle Alliance I saw the Emperor, and he was looking straight at *me!* I blushed crimson at the thought that he should see me looking the wrong way. Then, along with my comrades, in I went among the hawthorn blossoms with a bound. As we struggled through the close-knit thorny branches the fire of the English, in our very faces, was terrible. All the same, with that deadly fire whipping us like hailstones, each of us managed to

pull a sprig of hawthorn—and out we came on the other side of the hedge and fell to on the English, every one of us with a spray of hawthorn blossoms in his mouth. We made short work of them. The killing went on until not one of the enemy in the orchard was left alive!

"Among the dead bodies which covered the ground we lined up—our bayonets bent, our wrists sprained, our flesh torn by the hawthorns, many of us wounded—while we shouted 'Long live the Emperor!' and our drums beat victory. But our victory was not to last. Barely were we formed when our commander, General Cambronne, called out to us: 'Now that you have shouted "Long live the Emperor!" my boys, you may shout with me "Long live Death!"—for the hour is come to die for our country and for Liberty!' And then we saw on all sides of the orchard, sweeping down upon us like a hurricane, black masses of Prussians. The hills around us suddenly were black with them. They seemed to rise up out of the earth. From right to left, from east to west, their black battalions were closing in upon us. We were surrounded, blocked, betrayed—we were lost! Once again I looked over at the hill of La Belle Alliance—but there was only a dense cloud of smoke where the great Napoleon had been!

"Desperately we formed in square about our brave General, who held aloft the tri-colour. From our four fronts blazed out a withering fire upon the oncoming black battalions. The grime of gunpowder, the smears of blood, gave us the look of monsters. And we fought, and fought!

We fought, so furious were we, showing our teeth like wolves; and we shouted hoarsely the cry that our General had given us: 'Hurrah for Death!' The dense black battalions—surrounding us and cutting us to pieces with grape- and round-shot—did not dare to charge us. Prudently they kept back from that hawthorn hedge that we had carried so gaily an hour before!

"In one of those moments of silence which sometimes come in battle—when it seems as though the cannon are taking a breathing spell—the English general coming down on us from the north cried shrilly: 'Give up the flag!'

"At that our General Cambronne, standing breast-deep among dead bodies, raised his sword, opened his mouth wide, as if he wanted to bite the heavens, and in a wild yell shouted —— But I will not tell you what he shouted. It is not a word to be uttered within convent walls!

"And then all the pistols, all the muskets, all the cannon, all the bombards, of the black battalions belched forth at short range so awful a fire from their iron bellies that the flowering hawthorn hedge was mowed down—and beyond it was mowed down the remnant of us who stood around our General and our flag. As for me, I felt a sudden blow in my breast as if a horse had kicked me. It spun me around like a top. Then I fell, my face to the ground!

"There I was, under a heap of dead bodies, all night. And there I might be still, I suppose, had I not been roused when morning came by a sharp pricking in my hand. My hand stuck out, somehow, from among the dead fellows on

top of me, and as I woke up I felt as though somebody was jabbing a knife into it. 'Ai!' I cried, as I opened my eyes and turned my head a little—and then I made out that a raven was perched on my hand and was pecking at it. He flew away at the sound of my voice, and I managed to crawl out from among the dead people. As I felt myself, to find out where I was wounded, a piece of iron dropped from my breast where it had lodged under my knapsack straps. It was this that had bowled me over without cutting my flesh. I was very sore and very shaky, but I was not wounded at all.

"The sun was rising clear from behind the hills of La Belle Alliance and Rossonne. Far off I could see the English and the Prussian battalions marching away. At last I got on my feet—not being very steady on them—and looked about me for my brave General and for the flag. But there was no General, there was no flag—both were gone! And then, my Sisters, to tell you the truth I fell to crying like a baby. Around me all my companions were lying dead; my General was wounded or a prisoner; my flag was in the hands of the English; my Emperor was vanished in a cloud! There seemed nothing left for me but to blow out my brains!"

"Oh!" sighed all the nuns together, as they heard these desperate words.

"But the thought came to me," the soldier went on quickly, "of my old mother, and of another very dear to me—and for them I lived. Off I started across the hills, and walked all day among dead bodies—because I went back by Quatre-Bras and Ligny, where the brave Mar-

shal Ney had beaten the English and where the Emperor had beaten the Prussians. And on and on for thirty days and thirty nights I walked alone. On that long march I, a grenadier of the Emperor's Guard, have had to beg my bread! When I come here to Avignon it is to see murdered Marshal Brune, a great soldier of France! Because I tried to protect his dead body from insult, I am stoned by dogs of Aristocrats—and would have been killed had I not found refuge here! Oh my Sisters, when I think of all this it is only your presence that keeps me from bellowing out: 'Sacré-nom-de-Dieu!'"

As the soldier undoubtedly had bellowed out precisely those words, all the Sisters uttered a shuddering "Oh!" and fell to crossing themselves vigorously—while the Mother Superior said in a reproving tone: "Brave soldier, do not blaspheme the name of the good God who three times has worked a miracle to save your life!"

"You are right, my Sister, and I am wrong. It is true that three times God has kept me alive by miracles. And I don't count as a miracle, you must understand, what I have just been telling you about. That was all in the day's work. Now it was another matter in Russia. If ever anybody got a miracle anywhere, I got one there!"

"Will you tell us about it?" Mother Scholastica asked. "That is," she added, checking herself, "if talking so much will not tire you and make you feverish. Perhaps you had better rest now."

Behind the curtain were vehement whisper-

ings of "Oh, don't stop him!" "Please let him go on!" "Do let him tell us about his miracle!"—and Adeline, pressing Mother Scholastica's hand, begged hardest of all that the soldier might talk on. The soldier, hearing these buzzing tones of entreaty, settled the matter. "There is no danger of my getting feverish," he said briskly, "because already I am well again. This little cut on my head don't amount to anything. We soldiers of the Great Army have skins that sew themselves together of their own accord!" And to show that he really was well he began to walk up and down the room with firm strides, curling his mustachioes as he walked. Even through the curtain, the nuns could see the outline of his tall and well-knit figure passing and repassing before the windows, and they followed his motions with a very eager gaze.

Mother Scholastica was quite as keen as the others were to hear the story. "Is it possible," she asked, "that you have been in closer peril of death than when you faced that dreadful hawthorn hedge?"

"You shall judge for yourself. Listen to what happened to me up there in that execrable land of snow."

CHAPTER XLIII

INTO A DESERT LAND

"RUSSIA is off at the very end of the earth, my Sisters," the soldier began, "and is an evil region that God only looks on at night. It is a land barren and desolate. Never a good blade of grass grows on its bleak hillsides and endless plains, and there is a town or a hamlet only about once in every thousand leagues. Why, when we marched into that huge wilderness, although there were close to half a million of us, we fairly were lost!

"But it seemed, to begin with, as if we never would get there at all. For thirteen long weeks we marched on and on—across our old battlefields in Germany, where we had stripped the double-headed eagle of his plumes; through Warsaw, where General Murat had hoisted the tri-colour over the Cathedral of Saint John seven years before; and then on into a country over there toward the sunrise that we didn't know at all. Every day we thought that we must come to the end of the world. We crossed rivers and we crossed mountains and we never seemed to get anywhere. Always before us was a land bare and dumb. Where were the Russians? we asked each other. What had become of the enormous army that we had seen at Auster-

litz? Why did we not fall in with some of those shaggy bearskin-clad lancers on their little red horses who so many times had pestered us? We stared and we stared—but always before us was emptiness. In endless succession we crossed vast bare plains on which not a tree, not even a bush, grew; on which the very grass was thin and dry; over which, ahead of us, the sun rose pale in the morning; over which, behind us, the sun set red at night—always hopelessly the same! Some said: 'We'll end by leaving the sun behind us for good and all!' Others said: 'We'll never find our way home again!' Everybody grumbled. It was enough to break your heart! Ahead of us, on his white horse, rode the Emperor—standing out clear against the sky, around him the flags and the eagles. There was no turning back possible while he led us. We followed him as a shepherd is followed by his flock.

"At last, one morning at sunrise, we saw far off on the horizon a long black line. What it was—town, forest, army—we did not know; but we did know that it was something that broke the endlessly dull sameness of our march. And so the whole four hundred and fifty thousand of us gave a shout that made the stars tremble! All day long we marched toward that black line. When night came it seemed to be no nearer to us—and when the sunrise came again it was gone! In bitter disappointment we marched on, dumbly following the Emperor and the flags. Late in the day we saw it again, and at first only half believed in it. But that time it was clearer and firmer in its outlines, and

became more real with each hour of our advance. Walls, towers, domes, uprose against the grey sky of evening. At last we were certain of it. That time it was a real city—not a mirage. Without waiting for orders we quickened our pace. We were in a hurry to get to it; for there, at last, the Russians must be. When there came a burst of flame and a thunderous report from the ramparts, and we saw the earth in front of our army ploughed up by cannon-balls, we fairly roared for joy!

"We embraced each other, we wept with delight. Those cannon-balls were manna to us in our desert. With a good will we could have hugged the cannoneers. At last we had the Russian army in front of us and within reach; no longer were we in utter loneliness, lost at the very end of the world. Then our artillery talked back for a little while to the Russians, and when we had made them our compliments with cannon-shots our bugles sounded the advance and our drums beat the pas-de-charge. Away we went, shouting 'Vive la France!' and 'Vive l'Empereur!' Presently we had sent the enemy flying—and Smolensk, the Holy City, was ours!

"But more than the soldiers whom we had been fighting had fled. Everybody had fled! The city was deserted utterly, as sad and as silent as a grave-yard. Worse than that, we found in it nothing to eat. The Russians had destroyed everything. Not a handful of oats was left for our horses, not a handful of wheat for ourselves. And the country had been cleaned as bare as the town. Grain, hay, everything

that would keep life in men or in horses, had been burned. Our victory had gained for us only an empty city and an empty land!

"To Moscow! To Moscow!" we shouted —and off we started again, with our Emperor and our flags and our eagles in the van.

"On and on and on we marched. We followed in the tracks of the retreating enemy—who would not make a stand and give us a chance to fight him, who always managed to keep beyond our reach no matter how fast we marched. We passed villages and towns, and found every one of them empty and deserted—just as Smolensk had been. The people had fled with everything that they could carry away. What they could not carry away they had burned. The fields had been burned over. We found them black and barren. Always about us smoke filled the air. For three weeks we marched through that abomination of desolation. Then we came to the banks of the river Moscowa, near a village called Borodino, and there the Russians gave us battle again.

"We fought them there through a whole long day. The rising sun was too late to see the beginning of our fighting, and the setting sun was too early to see its end. But after the sun had left us there was a flash of light of another sort—when all the sabres of Marshal Ney's fifteen thousand cavalrymen flashed out together as they charged! Oh, good Sisters, if you could have seen that flash, when those fifteen thousand sabres all at once leaped from their scabbards and dazzled the densely massed battalions on which they fell! Nothing could stand be-

fore that charge! The Russians cowered, wavered, broke—and fled like a frightened herd of bulls! They abandoned everything—artillery, ammunition, the whole of their baggage train. And they left the road before us, straight into Moscow, clear and free! On we marched along that road for seven days. Always around us was desolation. Always the smoking land was bare. Then we reached, at last, the capital of Russia—the only capital in Europe over which had not waved the French flag!

"We were at the end of our vastly long march, and we held the city to conquer which we had come so far. When we saw the great palaces, and the wonderful Kremlin, and the churches with their gilded domes, we were sure that we should find food in plenty and that our hardships were at an end. But we were wrong. Moscow was as clean-swept as all the towns had been along the road. Everything had been carried off or destroyed. Even the people were gone. We found only a few old men and women, and a few children, who came to us crying for food. To save them from starving we gave them the bread from our own mouths. I can't tell you for how far around the city the land had been laid waste. As far as we could see, the fields were smoking. The smoke hung over the city, nearly suffocating us. We were put on short rations, and were glad to kill and eat our own disabled horses and the few miserable beasts which the Russians had left behind them. We cooked our lean meals in the open squares of the city. We grenadiers of the Guard were camped on the square before the

palace of the Senate. When wood ran short we boiled our pots over fires fed with the gilded chairs of the Senators.

"Then came winter—a horrible winter of darkness and bitter cold! The sun showed himself for no more than two hours a day—hanging low down on the far horizon, pale, giving out no heat, like a big moon. And with the cold always was hunger. Without sunlight, without warmth, without bread—death was not far away!

"One night we were wakened from our sleep, as we lay huddled close together for warmth in the palace of the Senate, by what seemed to be volley-firing; and as we opened our eyes we were dazzled by a glare of brilliant red light which poured in through the windows and danced upon the ceiling and walls. We thought that the enemy must be upon us. Delighted to get to grips with him, we snatched up our arms and rushed out of doors. But the enemy that confronted us was Fire! A great wave of fire thunderously was overwhelming the city. What we had taken for the sound of musketry was the crackling of houses and churches and palaces in the flames. To the heights of heaven that awful conflagration rose!

"We had to run for it, and to run fast. All in a jumble—infantry, cavalry, artillery—we got away, the fire howling after us so close that the backs of our necks were singed. Suddenly we found ourselves in the midst of a tremendous rush of water. On one side of us the enemy had started the fire. On the other side he had turned the river into the streets. We were

caught between the two—and there went up from that confused and bewildered multitude a great woeful cry. Some of the horses, fairly maddened, turned backward and plunged with their riders into the flames. For an instant horse and man would flare up like tow, and then would be a black twisting thing that dwindled to nothing in the blaze. That's the way it must be in the seven throats of hell!

"The water was up to our waists, and how we got through it and away from the fire I'm sure I don't know. But we managed, somehow or other, to do both—and at last found ourselves on a little height where the fire could not follow us and where the water could not come. We made no halt. There was nothing to halt for. In the city that so coldly had sheltered us, everything was destroyed. Our one chance was to go out again by the road that had brought us into that desert land. Again the Emperor led us, surrounded by his flags and his eagles. By the huge light of burning Moscow we saw him at the head of our column—wearing his white coat, seated on his white horse—a pale figure cut out against the black sky!"

CHAPTER XLIV

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW

"ALL that night," the soldier continued, "we went onward. When day came we saw two fires off there on the horizon, and we couldn't tell which was the red burning Moscow and which was the red rising sun. Nor did we care. Already we were careless of everything but our own pain.

"On and on we marched, our flesh whipped blue by the bitter wind. Great clouds came down from the north and discharged upon us their lading of snow. Behind the clouds the pale sun was lost wholly. From the fallen snow came a faint and ghastly light by which we went on our way. Only we had no way. At first the snow was to our ankles, then it was to our calves, then it was to our knees. As it fell it blinded us like needles, blown by the cruel wind that froze our very marrow; and in the strange pale light of it we could not tell when the night was with us and when the day. From time to time one of us, worn out with cold and hunger, would stagger a little and then pitch face downward into the snow. Nobody turned to pick him up. When we had marched on and left him we could hear the howling of

the wolves. But we were not utterly hopeless, because our officers told us that when we got to Smolensk we would find food in plenty, along with shelter from the cold. We were too glad to believe them, and we looked forward to Smolensk as to Paradise.

"Well, we got to Smolensk—and the little black bread that we found there served us for just a single day! Then on we went again—for we *had* to go on, it was our only chance! On we went, I say, over that endless white plain under that endless grey sky. More and more of our men staggered out from the ranks, fell into the snow silently, and were left there for the wolves. When our horses died the wolves did not get a chance to eat them—we were thankful to eat them ourselves. But they were lean eating—having themselves been feeding upon nothing more nourishing than each others' tails and manes.

"At last we reached the banks of a river called the Berezina, and there we had trouble. In September, in good weather, when we were well fed, we had crossed that river as jolly as fish; but late in November, in icy winter, when we were famished, the crossing was another story. To be waist-deep in that ice-cold current, battling with great masses of floating ice, was a close fight with death for starving men. The Emperor ordered a bridge to be thrown across the river; and from a pine forest growing on its banks we soon got out all the timber that the engineers wanted. But just as we were starting our bridge there came down on us from the bluffs above the river a tremendous hail of

lead and iron. Guided, as the wolves were, by the trail of dead that we left behind us, the Russians had been following our army in the hope of just such a chance as they had found. There they were, fighting away with us—with all the odds on their side! They were at their ease on the heights above us. We were crowded together on the bank of the river, as good a target as need be for their plunging fire. Marshal Ney did his best to dislodge them with his weak cavalry; and while he fought them we went on with our bridge-building—and nice work we had of it: standing in that ghastly cold water, in peril of death from the floating ice, in peril of death from the Russian fire!

"As for me, I got relieved from duty in a very extraordinary way. I was hammering down a pile which two men held steady against the fierce current, and in order to hammer it I was standing on a beam which two other men held fast. Down the river I saw coming a huge block of ice, heading straight for us. I sung out to the men to dive and let the mass of ice pass over them. But they were not quick enough. In an instant the saw-like edges of the ice had cut off their heads and the heads were frozen fast to the ice-raft. The beam on which I was standing was broken by the shock and I barely had time to leap on the block of ice—and so to be carried down with the heads of my four comrades on the bow of my horrible raft!

"On I was rushed by the swift current helped by the bitter wind. I lost sight of the army very quickly. The sound of the firing grew fainter as I was whirled down the stream.

At last my ice-raft grounded, and I got on shore again more dead than alive. I had no arms but a pistol, I had only the clothes that I stood in to protect me against the dreadful cold. 'Keep up your spirit!' I said to myself. 'A grenadier of the Guard must never give in!' And so off I started to catch up with the army. I had not the sound of the firing to guide me. That had stopped, and I concluded that our men had beaten the Russians off.

"Well, in that wilderness of snow it didn't take long for me to lose myself. Presently I could not tell anything about where I was going, and I just trusted to luck and walked on and on. Now and then I would pull a handful of dry grass from under the snow and chew it to keep down the pangs of hunger; but I got weaker and weaker as I was more and more starved with hunger and with cold. After a while I saw what I took to be a very big black object a long way off. I fancied it to be as big as the Kremlin in Moscow, as I saw it rising up before me out of the snow. But instead of being big and far away it was small and near to me. Almost in a moment I had come up with it, and it proved to be the dead body of a horse honeycombed by the gnawings of the wolves. Famished, I flung myself upon it, hoping to find some scraps of flesh. But it is ill gleaning after the wolves: there was nothing left but skin and bone.

"With the anguish of death upon me I laid myself down beside the carcass, which at least sheltered me a little from the biting wind. Hope had left me, and I was ready to die, when I saw

coming toward me a hairy monster that I took at first to be a bear but that I soon saw was a fur-clad man. He held a long stick, a sort of Cossack's lance, in his hand and was coming straight for me. I still had strength enough to draw my pistol, and with my numb fingers I managed to cock it. Just as I was going to fire, he threw aside the muffling of furs from about his head and I saw the gentle and kindly old face of a Russian pope. With a friendly smile in his blue eyes he pointed with his free hand to the Greek cross that he wore upon his breast, and as he evidently meant me no harm I let my pistol fall upon the snow. And then, all of a sudden, a mist came before my eyes, and what little strength I had left oozed out of me, and it seemed to me that I certainly was going to die. I surely should have died but for the help that that kind old man gave me. From his own body he stripped his fur coat and wrapped me in it—and then with his breath and with chafing he strove to warm my hands.

"Years and years ago, when I was a little lad, the Bishop of Mendes gave me a medal of Notre Dame de Bon Secours, saying to me: 'When you are in dire peril of death, take out this medal and the good Mother will rescue you.' It seemed to me that I never could be in direr peril of death than I was just then, and while the good pope was comforting me I slipped my hand into my pocket and brought out the medal. He took it from me and kissed it reverently. Then he unslung from his neck a little flask and gave me a drink of a strong cordial that was a veritable elixir of life. As

that cordial got down into my stomach and warmed me I suddenly felt as though I were made over new. And then that blessed old man brought from his wallet a loaf of bread that I simply devoured! I was quite mysef again. My eyes could see clearly and my legs were strong.

"The good old pope wanted to give me back my miraculous medal—but it had worked its miracle for me, and I signed to him to keep it as a token of my thankfulness and goodwill. And so he kissed it again in sign that he accepted it—and by way of showing me still more of his goodness and charity he hung the little flask of wonderful cordial about my neck and gave me another loaf of bread out of his leather bag. He pointed out the way in which I should go in order to find my comrades, and at the last, after he had embraced me, he made the sign of the cross on my forehead with his thumb—just exactly as the Bishop of Mendes had done when, so long ago, he gave me the medal on the bridge of Saint-Jean d'Ardières!

"Off I went as lively as a cricket—and within two hours after that miraculous meeting I caught up with the army again and was in my place in the van-guard close to the Emperor. My comrades, who were sure that I was dead, made such an outcry over me that the Emperor himself turned and saluted me! Think of that, my Sisters! The Emperor, the Great Napoleon, raised his hand and saluted me! And just didn't the boys shout over it! 'Vive Pascalet! Vive Pascalet!' they roared."

CHAPTER XLV

"FAREWELL, PASCALET!"

As Pascalet spoke these words, which suddenly revealed his identity, a cry rang out behind the curtain and Adeline fell fainting into Mother Scholastica's arms. Instantly there was a bustle of confused movement, and with it a bustle of more confused talk.

"Heavens! She's fainting!"

"Carry her into the chapel and lay her at the feet of Saint Ursula!"

"Call the Father Confessor!"

"Great Saint Marys of the Sea, take her soul into your keeping!"

"We must get her to bed at once!" This last from the practical Sister Margai.

Hearing all this stir, Pascalet could not resist the temptation to raise the curtain a little that he might see what was the matter. What he saw was a nun being borne away in the arms of her companions. For an instant he had a glimpse of a death-pale face so lovely and so beautiful that sight of it set his heart in a whirl. Then she was gone!

Monsieur Péru was called in from reading his breviary in the garden to minister to the welfare of this troubled Sister's soul. He was startled by finding her in anything but the collapsed

state that the frightened Sister who called him had described. Her faint was past, and the ebbing tide of her life had flowed back strong and full. Her cheeks were a rich red, her beautiful large eyes had a flame in them that made the Father Confessor cast his own eyes down. In a tremble of excitement she fell on her knees before him and cried: "Holy priest of a merciful God, hear the confession of the most unhappy of the Sisters of Saint Ursula of Jesus! In my poor heart is a love as piercing as a thorn from the sacred Crown. Since I was a child of fifteen years I have known that love's sweet bitterness, the sting of that dear thorn! Ah, foolish have I been! I thought that I could hide away from it behind Saint Ursula's veil. I thought that in eating the angel's bread of the Holy Sacrament I would forget the taste of the bread of love. I thought that the cry of my longing flesh would be silenced by the cry of my spirit before the altars. I thought that I should forget my earthly bridegroom when I became the bride of Christ!

"But oh, my Father, I have forgotten nothing, and the thorn ever has sunk deeper and deeper into my heart. To-day all my blood cries out in love-hunger, and my soul chants not holy anthems before the altar but is lost in passionate song. For to-day my earthly bridegroom has come back to me; and what I am forgetting—oh help me! help me to grace and mercy!—what I am forgetting is my promise to my God!"

Monsieur Péru, old and wise and abounding in charity, had learned in the course of his long and good life how to touch aching hearts with

a loving tenderness that gave sure solace to their pain. "My child," he said gently, "for every sin there is the mercy of forgiveness. Despair not. To your soul the peace of God will return again, and your heart-hurt will be healed by the balm of prayer."

"Never! Never!" cried Adeline wildly. "For my pain there is but one balm, for my hurt there is but one cure. In death alone can I find rest and ease!"

"My daughter," said the good priest, speaking very gravely, "do you doubt the infinite goodness of God?"

"If His goodness be infinite," Adeline responded quickly, "let Him give me that which will calm my pain; and then let Him cure it by taking me to Himself!"

"What is it that will calm your pain, my daughter? If what you desire may be had by a remission of your rules—not of your vows—you shall have it. Your rules were prescribed, and may be relaxed, by man. Your vows, being taken of your own choice, are the inflexible will of God."

"My Father," Adeline said eagerly, while her downcast eyes grew still brighter and her cheeks a warmer crimson, "may Saint Ursula—whom I may be setting to weeping in heaven—pardon me for what I ask of you; and may God pardon me—and send me death quickly when you have granted me my prayer." She paused for a moment and then, hiding her glowing face in her hands, continued falteringly: "My earthly bridegroom has come back to me. He is here, close beside me—under this very

roof. What I ask is that I may touch for one single moment his dear hand; that I may say to him one single word: 'Farewell!' If that much may be granted to me, dear Father, I give you my promise that with the scourge I will conquer my flesh, and that hence onward until my death I will remain the faithful spouse of Jesus my Lord!"

Out of the very depths of her heart she had asked for this mercy and she waited in agony for her reply. She had no long suspense. In a moment Monsieur Péru answered her, speaking very gently and tenderly: "My daughter, you may be sure that Saint Ursula is smiling lovingly upon you and that our Lord Jesus blesses you. Dry your eyes and praise God. Without fear of damnation, or even of the pains of purgatory, you may have what you desire. You may touch the hand of him whom you love while you say farewell to him; but you may neither see him nor be seen by him, nor in any way make yourself known to him—and this is rather for his sake than for yours. It would be cruel that the quenching of the flame which is in your heart should be won at the cost of filling his heart with a hopeless fire!"

Quite overcome by the joy that this permission gave her, Adeline laughed and cried in the same breath and was unable to utter a single word of thanks. To set her at ease Monsieur Péru spoke to her in a lighter tone. "After all, my child," he said, as he drew out his snuff-box, "your scruples, since there is no possibility of sin in this matter, are rather too finely drawn. You are almost as bad," he went on

with a smile, "as that goose of a Sister Margai: who woke me up at four o'clock the other morning to confess what she said was a sin of gluttony—and which turned out to be a desire to eat some grapes that she had seen on an arbour but had not even touched!" And with these words he snuffed the snuff into his nostrils and went sneezing away, leaving Adeline radiantly happy—but hardly knowing whether she were dreaming or had heard true.

Her happy doubts were not long lasting. In a few moments, sent by Monsieur Péru, Mother Scholastica came to her cell and said briskly as she opened the door: "Hurry, Sister, if you want to say good-bye to our soldier. He's going now." And then she stopped short —a little surprised by finding Adeline bending over the chest in which she kept her belongings, and the contents of the chest for the most part strewn upon the floor. There was her black frock with its trimming of Paris lace, her fichu, her young girl's cape, and—most precious of all —the boy's clothes which had been Pascalet's and which later had been her own. All of these garments were folded with an exquisite neatness. From them came a delicious odour of lavender. She touched them in the reverent fashion that she would have touched holy relics. Her eyes were soft with tears. As the Mother Superior entered the cell she had unfolded Pascalet's little carmagnole, the jacket of the precious suit of clothes, and was feeling for something in the pocket. Confused at being come upon when thus employed, she blushed and looked down.

"Are you looking for something, Sister? Can I help you?" Mother Scholastica asked in a kindly tone that set Adeline at her ease.

"Thank you, reverend Mother," she answered, as she drew from the pocket of the jacket a little object that she held hidden in her hand, "I have just finished. I am ready now." Her voice broke a little as she spoke. Under her white wimple her heart was beating fast. She swayed in her walk, and was thankful to have the support of Mother Scholastica's arm. Together they went through the corridors to the parlour, and heard as they entered it Pascalet's clear rich voice as he spoke to Sister Margai. But the black curtain was drawn close over the grating, and while Adeline could hear she could not see.

"Brave soldier," said the Mother Superior, "I have brought to say good-bye to you the Sister who fainted a little while ago. We did not wish you to go away thinking that your story of the wars had made her ill."

Pascalet brought his hands together with a cheerful clap, and said heartily: "Holy woman of God, that is real thoughtfulness! You don't know how much good you're doing me. I'm just as much obliged to you as I can be—and if it wasn't for this confounded grating I'd prove it to you with a good hug! It worried me to think of that poor nun fainting that way. I should have hated to have gone away without knowing that she was all right again—as I do now."

"Thank you, brave soldier Pascalet," said Adeline, "for your kind thought about me;

and since you were troubled a little on my account I am very glad that I have come to say good-bye to you. I have a little present for you. With the permission of our reverend Mother, here beside me, I give to you these three little silver crowns. Perhaps you may be pleased to buy with them something that will please your old mother. You must tell her that in the Convent of Saint Ursula of Avignon there is a Sister who night and morning never will fail to pray for her and for her handsome boy Pascalet. You must tell her——"

"Forgive me, holy woman," Pascalet interrupted, "but why should you give these three crowns to me? Keep them for your convent."

"No, no! They are for you. They are yours. Take them. Remember, I am under the vow of poverty, and for me to keep them would be a black sin. Soldier Pascalet, you would not wish me to commit sin? Come, if you will not take them for yourself, you will not refuse to take them for your old mother?"

"Oh, for my mother—that is another matter. For her I cannot refuse them. I take them gladly. Ah, my dear old mother! Who knows if I shall find her still alive? I was fifteen years old when I left her—and that was twenty years ago! Think of it, for twenty years I have not seen my mother! Even if she be living, she will not know me—me, her son!"

As he spoke, Pascalet grasped Adeline's slender hand in his two strong hands and kissed it and wept over it as though it had been the hand of his mother. Burning hot it was as he pressed it and kissed it! Adeline was thrilled

from head to foot by this caress of her Pascalet. She trembled as in a fever as his silky mustache brushed softly against her hand and against her delicate white wrist. At last, reluctantly, he relinquished that burning hand—and as it was withdrawn behind the black curtain the three silver crowns fell ringing to the floor at his feet. Then from behind the iron grating that the curtain covered came a sweet voice saying: "Farewell, Pascalet! For ever, farewell!"

"God keep you, my Sister," Pascalet answered; "and may He reward you for all that you have done to me!"

On the inner side of the grating there was the sound of soft footsteps retreating. Pascalet noticed, with ears trained to the cadence of rhythmic marching, that the footsteps went irregularly. But he turned from the grating without giving the matter a second thought.

Sister Margai had picked up the three crowns. She handed them to him, but she did not venture to look at him nor to speak. To her the whole of that lightly-passing tragedy had been clear and her heart was bursting with pity and with grief. Still without speaking, she unbarred the door and held it open. "Good-bye, dear kind Sister," Pascalet said to her—and so stepped across the threshold and was gone. When she had closed the door behind him she burst out crying like a child. Adeline was very dear to her, and she wept for Adeline's unhappy love—a love that was hopeless enough to die of!

CHAPTER XLVI

THE WHITE FLAG OF SHAME

Dusk was falling as Pascalet came out upon the Rue Annanelle and headed resolutely for the Place du Grand Paradis. He knew the danger that he risked, wearing the uniform of a soldier of the Empire, in walking the streets of Avignon. He knew what was likely to happen to him should he be caught again by the dogs of the nobility, the murderers of Marshal Brune. But he who had dared death for twenty years on the great battlefields of Europe was not to be frightened from his purpose by the hounds of the White Terror. To see Vauclair and Lazuli and Clairet again—Clairet, almost a man grown by this time—he would have fought his way through an army! Little did he know that Clairet, on the very day of his home-coming, had been slain by Papalists and traitors and cast into the Rhône! And so, with his hand on the loaded pistol stuck in his sash, the dusk favouring him, Pascalet walked on firmly toward the home of his friends.

The August evening was clear and warm. Up in the elm trees in the little parks the cigales still were singing. Children were playing in the streets. Groups of women sat in the doorways, fanning themselves with their aprons and

trying to get a breath of fresh air. Pascalet walked with his head bent down, without looking about him—that he might not see floating from almost every window the hated fleur-de-lys: the flag of traitors, of the friends of the Germans and Austrians—the white flag of shame! Everywhere hung this rag of national dishonour: on the public places, in the streets, even in the little alleys. From the doors and windows of rich and poor were out-thrust its guilty folds! His blood boiled at the thought that it waved above him. Only by a great effort could he keep himself from shouting: "Down with the cowards and traitors! Down with the King!"

"Isn't that man wearing the uniform of Bonaparte's brigands?" he heard a woman say as he passed one of the doorway groups.

"He can't be," another answered. "He wouldn't dare to show himself that way in the streets of Avignon."

"If he is," said a third, "it won't be long before a patrol will be making him swallow the soup with twelve plums in it!"

"To think," said a fourth, "that such wretches could be found to fight against our good allies—the Germans and the Austrians and the English! Monsters like that cannot be born of women—they must have been brought forth in a pig-sty!"

Pascalet heard these words without realizing their meaning; without perceiving that the monster these women were talking about was himself!

On the Plan de Lunel he came upon a faran-

dole made up of children—for the most part little tots of three and four years old. They carried white flags, and as they farandoled gaily their shrill little voices piped out:

"No one shall we spare!
So Trestaillon commands."

On the Place de l'Horloge, when he came to it, he found matters still worse. There the Whites of Avignon were assembled in force; and there this poor brave soldier—who had risked his life in a hundred battles with foreign foes—saw the ladies of the nobility and of the bourgeoisie welcome with hand-clapping and cries of "Vive le roi!" two battalions of Germans and Austrians who had just arrived to occupy the city. Shame and confusion!

Poor Pascalet saw those good-for-nothing marchionesses and countesses fling themselves upon the necks of the more or less drunken Germans and Austrians smelling of rancid pork—the characteristic odour of that red-haired race! He saw these women putting their hands upon the arms of the soldiers and drawing them into their houses. Following them were the cowards who had skulked in caves and in forests when France was in danger. Those identical cowardly deserters carried the knapsacks and the muskets of the Prussian soldiers and followed like lackeys their wives linked arm-in-arm with those dirty-beards! Never, since the world was a world, did any nation swallow such shame!

From everywhere on the Place de l'Horloge

ɔse shouts of "Long live the King!" "Long ve the Allies!" With these was roared out:

> "No one shall we spare!
> So Trestaillon commands.
> Death to Republicans—
> Who all are rogues."

uch was the excitement caused by the coming f the foreign soldiers that no one noticed the rave fellow wearing the red epaulettes of the ɪrand Army of France. That was good luck ɪr him. Had they realized what uniform he ʼore they would have torn him to pieces—and ɪrown his fragments into the Rhône to keep ɔmpany with Marshal Brune.

Confounded by what he saw, his heart filled ʼith rage, Pascalet went by the dark Rue ɜ la Poulasseri toward Vauclair's home. He ɪet no more Austrians or Germans; and the ʼhite flag—which at first flaunted him every-ʼhere—was less in evidence as he neared the lace du Grand Paradis. As he walked on rap-.ly he said to himself: "What can the Reds of ɪe Midi be thinking about? Where is the Na-ɔnal Guard? Where is Bérigot—who, when ɜ crossed himself, used to say: 'In the name ʼ Liberty and Equality and Fraternity!'? And auclair and Peloux and all the rest of the .arseilles Battalion, surely they cannot all be ɜad?"

But these thoughts were forgotten as he ɪme out upon the little Place and looked up ɪgerly, hoping to see in those well-remem-ɜred windows a friendly light. Yet he could ɔt see very clearly. In anticipation of this

happy meeting, after a parting of twenty years, tears dimmed his eyes and his heart was beating hard.

He stopped short, while there went through him a pang of pain keen as that of a knife-thrust. There was no light in the windows—because there were no windows! Before him in the dusk was only the charred skeleton of what had been so warm-hearted a living home. Four blackened and partly fallen walls remained, a curiously-clinging scrap of the tiled roof, a few charred ends of beams. That was all! Standing before that doorway which had opened to give him such generous shelter, he looked through it—and through where floors and roof had been—right upward to the stars!

He was overwhelmed! confounded! stunned! As he rallied a little the thought came to him that he might not be in the Place du Grand Paradis at all. But a glance about him sufficed to put that faint hope to flight. There was the chapel of the Violet Penitents where the Patriot Club used to hold its meetings; there was the potter's house; there were the shops of the butcher and the fishmonger; there was everything just as he remembered it—save the one thing that he remembered best of all! And then to his bitterness of sorrow was added the bitterness of shame. From the distant crowd sounded faintly shouts of "Long live the Allies!" "Long live the King!" With these hateful cries came the sound of children's voices, near him, singing:

"No one shall we spare!
So Trestaillon commands."

His heart full almost to breaking, he turned from that desolate place and walked quickly away through the darkness. Passing across the Place des Grands Carmes, along the Rue de la Carréterie, he went out from the city by the Porte Saint-Lazare: and so found himself upon the high-road by which he had come up from Malemort to Avignon twenty years before—with Monsieur Randoulet's letter in his pocket, along with his fortune of three silver crowns.

For a while, as he walked onward through the warm quiet of the August night, troubling noises followed him. Faintly he could hear the shouts of the vile creatures who were welcoming the white-coated Austrians and the green-coated Germans; less faintly could he hear the shrill voices of the innocent little children singing the foul song that they had been taught:

> " No one shall we spare !
> So Trestaillon commands.
> Death to Republicans—
> Who all are rogues ! "

But as he went onward these sounds grew less and less—dwindling to the mere hum of gadflies, and ceasing altogether when he had passed the oratory of Paradou. Then he had with him only the croaking of the frogs in the ditches by the roadside and the cheery chirping of the crickets in the fields. These were soothing noises, and as he listened to them he realized how weary he was—weary with the strain of emotion far more than with bodily fatigue—and was glad to seat himself and rest. In deso-

late sorrow, his head held between his hands, tears dropping from his eyes. he thought of that wrecked home in which Vauclair and Lazuli once had lived. As his mind turned to what probably had happened to them his blood ran cold—and then his desire for certain knowledge, and for revenge, aroused in him a mad longing to go back to the Place de l'Horloge and there to grip by the throat the first Aristocrat that he could lay hands on and to squeeze out of him all that he could tell. The end of it, of course, would be that he would be torn to pieces. But that did not matter much—and while they were killing him he could get in some good killing of his own on that traitor crowd!

As he raised his head from his hands he was startled by seeing in every direction about him great blazing fires. On the hills of Vedènes, on the garigues of Pernes, on the mountains of Venasque. ricks and farm-houses were burning. The country side was lighted up as though on the eve of St. John.

Alas, those were the bonfires of the White Terror! All Liberals, all Republicans, all soldiers who had shielded their country in her danger, all whose sons had served in the army, alike were punished: their farmsteads robbed and burned, their crops destroyed, their vines uprooted, their olive trees and their fruit trees cut down. And the poor patriots themselves, with their wives and sons and daughters, were stabbed to death with pitchforks and thrown into the flames!

Suddenly Pascalet realized the meaning of these fires—as he saw men dancing about a

near-by burning farm-house and heard them singing:

"No one shall we spare!
So Trestaillon commands.
Death to the Republicans—
Who all are rogues!"

As he heard the words of this vile song a shudder of dread seized him. What was being done there before his eyes no doubt was being done elsewhere also. His own old mother might be in danger—because her son had fought for twenty years for France! In another moment he was walking on again rapidly toward Malemort. As he went onward the night was riven by cries for help, and was lighted by blazing homes. From Entraigues, from Monteux, from Carpentras, rang out the cruel words:

"So Trestaillon commands."

CHAPTER XLVII

"AFTER ALL STRIVING—PEACE"

PASCALET had left Carpentras behind him when the sky above the mountains eastward began to brighten with a tender light, as though it were powdered with green gold. Valley and plain still were in darkness, and in deepest silence—for even the croakings of the frogs and the chirpings of the crickets had died out softly as the stars grew pale suddenly in the ghostly glow of dawn.

On he went, walking faster and faster as he drew near to the hillsides of Malemort, his heart beating hard! So soon would he see them—his mother, and his brother Lange upon whom, though he was a man grown, he never had laid eyes! Very likely his mother would not know him. How should she know him, after all these twenty years? But he would make her feel that it was her own Pascalet come back to her! Ah, he would hold her so close in his arms, he would so weep with joy, that she would have no doubt of him! And if she still had doubt, he would go to good Monsieur Randoulet (Alas!) the kind priest—*he* would make her understand that it was her own Pascalet, at last come home! He walked faster

and faster. The nearer that he came to the village the longer seemed the road.

Day was breaking. He began to see about him, and to recognise with delight the old landmarks which he remembered so well. There was Claude's vineyard. There were Monsieur Jullian's poplars. There was Lou Materoun's olive-orchard. And there, crowned with the great oaks which surrounded the Château, was the hill of La Garde. Just below those oaks, hidden among the olive trees, was the hut where his father and his mother had lived—in which he himself had been born! He walked faster—faster!

Behind him on the road he heard the hoof-beats of a galloping horse. He did not turn—his eyes were searching in the dim light for the spire of the village church—but as the sound came nearer he drew aside to leave the way clear. He looked up as the horse came abreast of him—and started back suddenly! The rider held a pistol in each hand levelled straight at him, as though to blow out his brains!

Quick as a cat, he sprang up the roadside bank and whipped out his own pistol and pointed it. "What are you up to?" he cried. "Go your way, and let me go mine. Or else——"

"Oùh!" exclaimed the horseman, as he reined in to a walk. "In this blinking twilight I took you for one of those miserable Royalists. Pray forgive me, good soldier."

The man's face had a familiar look to Pascalet, and his voice had a familiar ring. "You

don't know me," he said, as he came down into the road again, "but I'm pretty sure I know you. Aren't you father Pantalin—who used to live at the farm of the Engarrouïnes, not very far from our poor hut of La Garde?"

"Why, you do know me, and that's a fact. Who are you, anyway?"

"I am the son of Pascal and of La Patine. Don't you remember me, Pascalet?"

"What!" cried the astonished Pantalin. He turned in his saddle, rested a hand on the flank of his horse, and so leaned down and stared at Pascalet hard. "No," he said slowly, "you can't be little Pascalet de la Patine. It's quite impossible!"

"But why is it impossible?" Pascalet asked.

"Because poor little Pascalet de la Patine is dead. He died of the plague, off there in Egypt with Bonaparte's army, a good fifteen years ago. Celégré, who was a drummer out there, brought the news. You can't have come to life again—after your mother and your brother wearing mourning for you, and having masses said for your soul!"

"Then my mother, my dear mother, still is alive?"

"*Your* mother! Oh, come now, it isn't right to make fun like that. The poor old woman's had sorrow enough as it is!"

"But I'm not making fun—any more than I'm dead of the plague, or of anything else. I'll prove it to you. Listen now! Don't you remember one day, close upon thirty years ago, when you and Big Satraman were setting a

boundary post between your pastures? Well, I was there, playing about with my pocket full of cigales, watching you. I didn't understand what you were doing, but it seemed to me very interesting. You planted the stone post in the deep hole that you had dug, and at the sides of it you buried some broken glass and the two halves of a tile—a tile cracked across carefully, so that the bits would come together again in a perfect joint. When you had quite finished, you turned suddenly on me and gave me a box on the ear that sent me spinning like a top and almost knocked me down; and then, while I still was spinning, Big Satraman gave me just as hard a box on the other ear that sent me spinning the other way! Then you said to me: 'Little man, you are young. As long as you live you'll remember that Big Satraman and I together set this stone!' And I do remember it, you see, very well indeed!"

"Tron-de-pas-goi!" shouted Pantalin. "Every word of that is true—and now I do believe that you didn't die of the plague and that you're Pascalet! Well, that's good news for your old mother. I'm off to be the first to tell her! Hurrah!" and Pantalin slashed his horse into a gallop and away he went like a whirlwind up the road!

Pascalet followed him almost on a run, his heart very full. Day was coming fast. He began to see clearly. "That's Toni Breca's window," he said to himself. "That's Toumassoun's chimney." "That's the roof of the town-hall." Almost everybody seemed to be still asleep. Smoke came from only a few

chimneys—the thin blue smoke that comes from poor people's fires.

Pantalin dashed through the open gateway of the village and disappeared. Pascalet, fairly running by this time, kept his eyes fixed upon the gateway—but not seeing clearly, because his eyes were full of tears. On he went, paying no attention to the dogs that came out from the houses scattered along the roadside and barked at his heels. His sole thought was that his dear old mother was alive, and that in only a very little longer he should have her in his arms!

And then through the gateway, uncertainly because of the distance and because his eyes were tear-dimmed, he saw something white fluttering. It was not a flag. It was moving—and moving toward him. It crossed the Place de la Porte, came through the gateway, came fluttering—a strange little ghost of a thing—toward him along the Carpentras road. He rubbed the tears from his eyes and saw more clearly. It was a little old woman, all in white, trotting along as fast as ever her thin little old legs could be made to go. And then there came a cry to him that pierced his very heart: "Pascalet! My Pascalet!" In another moment old Patine—in her shift, her thin grey hair streaming down her shoulders—plunged breathless into his arms!

As the labourers watered their mules and asses at the gate-fountain, there in the early morning, they saw the strong young son pass by them carrying his old mother in his arms—as though she were the little weak child. They held each other clasped tight, without a word—

so sweet and sharp and strong was the joy that thrilled their reunited souls!

For more than fifty years Pascal de la Patine —for so, thenceforward, did the village folk call him—was an exemplar of upright living to the whole countryside. He was the joy and the solace, the friend and the counsellor, of three generations.

A simple peasant, he drew his living from the earth and earned it by the sweat of his brow. Through the long days he toiled, but while his body was bowed down his soul ranged high. At daylight he started for his field, and not until dark did he return again—seated sidewise on his grey mule. Summer and winter, with his good grey mule helping him, he cultivated the land that Adeline had given to his mother and that later became his own.

Once in every year, in the glad Christmas time, did Pascal give himself a holiday. Regularly, when the last Sunday in Advent came, he put on his best suit of good rough cloth and his well-greased thick leather shoes; and then, with his pear-tree staff in his hand, off he started before daylight for Malaucène—to spend the eight days of the blessed Christmas season with his friends Lazuli and Vauclair.

When Pascalet—to them he always was Pascalet—reached Malaucène, Vauclair took off his apron, put aside his plane, and locked his shop door. Seated through the bright day on the sunny bench sheltered by the garden wall, seated through the evening before a rousing fire, the three would talk and talk together

about old times. Sad talk it would be about the little house that fire had eaten in Avignon, about the little lad who died so cruelly just as he had grown to be a man; but the talk would become glad, and Lazuli would dry her tears and smile again, as it turned upon the good Planchots, and upon the years of quiet comfort there in Malaucène. They were not rich, those good Vauclairs—but neither did they fear that the wolf would come snarling at their door. Vauclair was a master-workman and trade was brisk with him. Lazuli, a very Martha, kept their little house as shining as a ring.

For the Christmas feast with Pascalet out would come the dusty bottles of Muscat de Baume and of the wine of the Popes; on the spit would turn a turkey smelling deliciously of the truffles of Mont Ventour! But even in the Christmas feast there would be always a note of sadness. When they had drunk to each other, clinking glasses, they would sit silent—until their bitter-sweet memories of the two who were not with them, of Clairet and of Adeline, moved them to tears.

And then, the Christmas holiday being ended, Pascalet would embrace Vauclair and Lazuli, take his pear-tree staff in his hand, and be off again to Malemort saying: "Until next year!"

It was while Pascal still was in his pontificat, in his full strength and power, that I had the happiness of hearing him tell the story of his life—of his childhood, of his battles in the great wars. He told us freely of his joys and of his griefs, but the mystery of his love for Adeline

he kept always shut within his heart. Did any one speak of her, he had no word to say.

Poor Adeline! After that day when she parted for ever from her Pascalet in the convent of the Ursulines—when she gave back to him the three silver crowns which she had treasured for twenty years, when her hand and her whole being thrilled with his ardent kisses—the end came soon! She had barred the door of her heart, and only a little while her life lingered behind those bars. Thanking God that He had permitted her once more to be with her Pascalet, she loosed her hold upon a world that held for her no happiness. In the May-time, when the aubépine bloomed white and sweet, she passed away!

Pascal de la Patine was worthy of this chaste love. God had created him with a heart as loyal as his soul was delicate and pure!

Even when Pascal had begun to nibble into his ninetieth year his probity was an example to us. He felt the earth calling to him, and over and over again he said to us: "Dear friends, I shall die soon; I certainly shall die soon; and when I die my brother Lange will die too—and then who will take care of the mule?" Then the thought of his good grey mule went from his clouded mind and his complaint changed. Over and over again he said: "I am a wicked man! My soul is damned! I merit death! I am a wicked man!"

One day, having slipped away from those who cared for him, he made his way to the roof of his house. From there we heard him calling: "Look out below! I don't want to hurt any

one! I merit death, and death must come to me. But I don't want to hurt anybody. Look out below!" And there we saw our dear good old Pascal all ready to throw himself into the street! We saved the old man by calling to him eagerly that he surely would hurt some one if he threw himself down. That appeal touched him. Back he went through the attic window, and presently was down among us, safe and sound.

We tried for a long while in vain to find out why he believed that his soul was damned and that he deserved to die. But at last out it came: and—of all things in the world—his crime was that, nearly eighty years before as he marched through Pierrelatte with the Marseilles battalion, he had spitted a hen on his bayonet and had not paid for it! It was the thought of that theft that had come back to him in his old age and had filled him with remorse! Argument had no effect upon him. He had stolen that hen, he said, and therefore he was damned and deserved to die!

At last, as the only way to clear his conscience of this crime, I—I who am telling you this story—harnessed up our old red horse to our cart and carted the simple good old man over to Pierrelatte to pay his debt. I will not say that I found the man to whom that long-dead hen had belonged. But I did hunt up a very old man, and in Pascal's presence explained to him that we had come to pay for a hen that had been stolen almost eighty years before! He could make nothing of my story. But into his hand I thrust a crown, willy-nilly, and we came

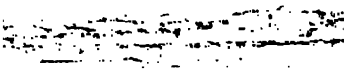
away leaving him bewildered. At any rate, we accomplished what we went for. Feeling that at last his crime was atoned for, dear old Pascal was satisfied and at peace.

When death had taken this good old man the whole village thronged to his funeral. On our way to the grave-yard, as it chanced, we met the young Comte de la Vernède, Calisto's son, riding up to his Château of La Garde. "Who's dead, that such a lot of you are turning out to the funeral?" he asked.

"It is Pascal, the son of La Patine."

Without raising his hat he spurred his horse and rode on, muttering between his teeth: "One scoundrel Red the less, then!"

THE END



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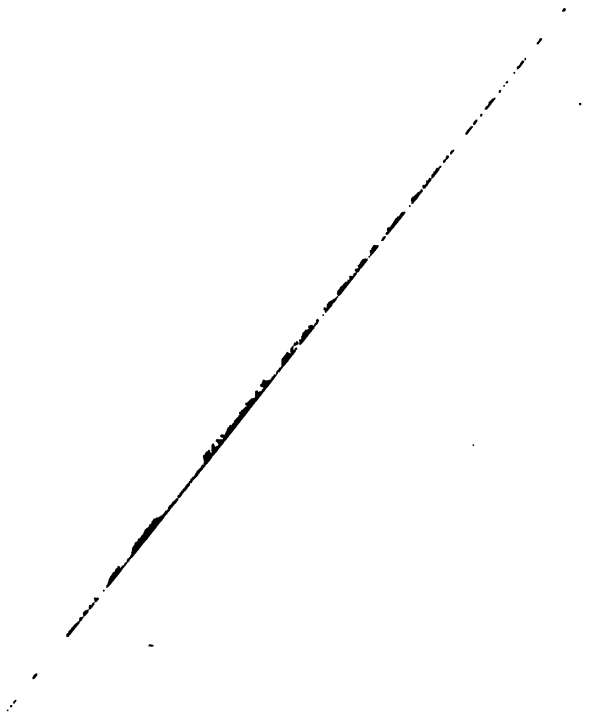
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